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THE NEW YORKER

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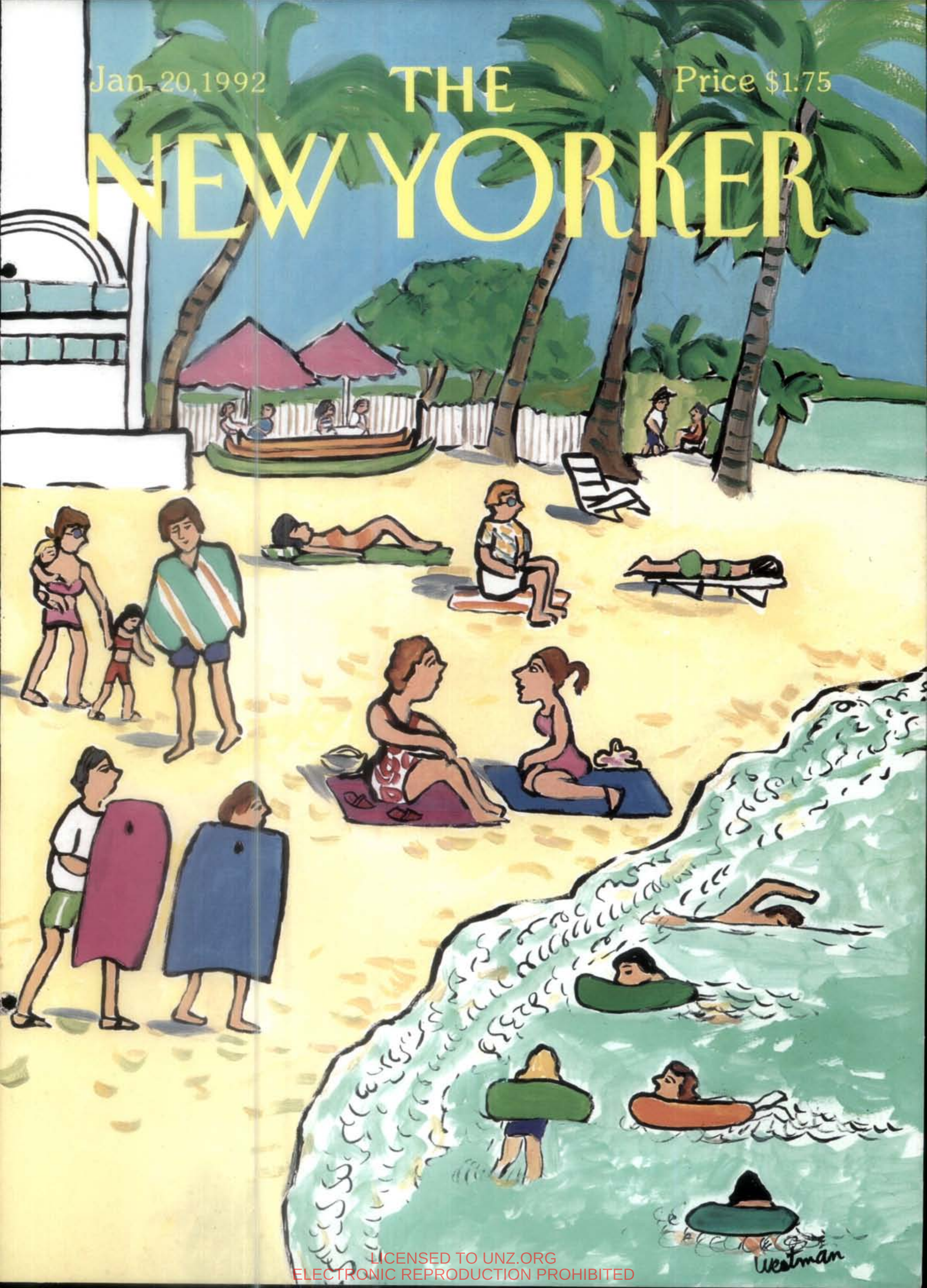

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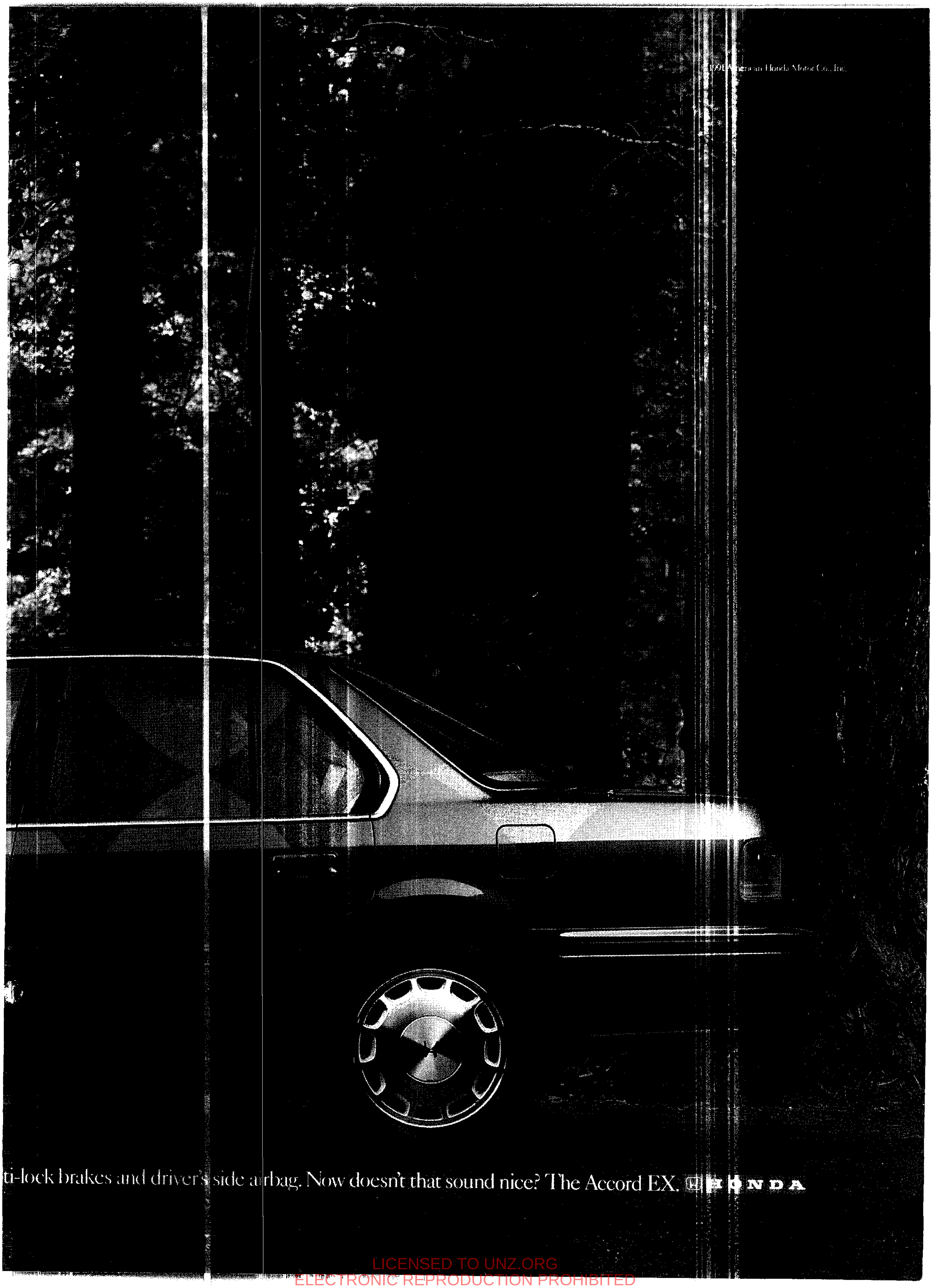
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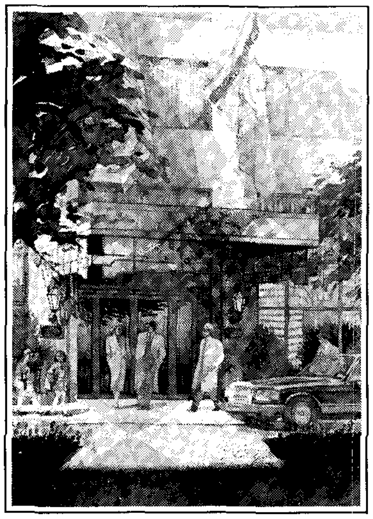

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

ENGLISH holiday pantomime is so inextricably associated with children that it comes as quite a shock to learn that, historically, the form often allied itself with adult concerns. For example, when theatrical censorship was applied in England to the spoken word, in 1737, the pantomime, or "panto," emerged as a way to circumvent the law. During the Victorian era, when many of the panto's more fairy-tale-like conventions were established, a series of burlesque amusements, known as "cod pantos," were written. In an age when Ibsen's "Ghosts" could be attacked as pornographic, these works—"Harlequin Prince Cherry Top and the Good Fairy Fairfuck" was perhaps the most notorious—often went unperformed, circulating sub rosa among the reading public. In our century, the baser elements have been restored to the stage, and the typical panto now combines humor high and low. The theory here is that while children require sweet sophistication, for adults it's sex that makes the medicine go down.

When this theory runs up against practice, however, the results can be confounding, as was made clear during a recent matinée of the Riverside Shakespeare Company's pantomime "Cinderella." When Ammer (Jim Fitzpatrick) and Tongs (Jay Brian Winnick) peered up the skirts of Cinder's stepsisters (Robert Mooney and John Keene Bolton) and came away less than enraptured, it was the kids who squealed with glee. Similarly, the frequent references to anatomical size produced merriment more juvenile than parental. As for ourself, we were pleased with the less lubricious aspects of the production. We liked the measured cadences of Dandini (Fredi Walker), a country squire whose shtick bears the stamp of Whoopi Goldberg's "Old Raisin" routine. We liked the costumes for Prince Charming's ball, which were designed by Gail Baldoni. We liked the way Buttons (Mark Honan) loped through the house before curtain time. Other audience members have apparently found pleasures here, too: "Cinderella" has just been extended, through March 8. At this rate, we may yet have Christmas in July.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

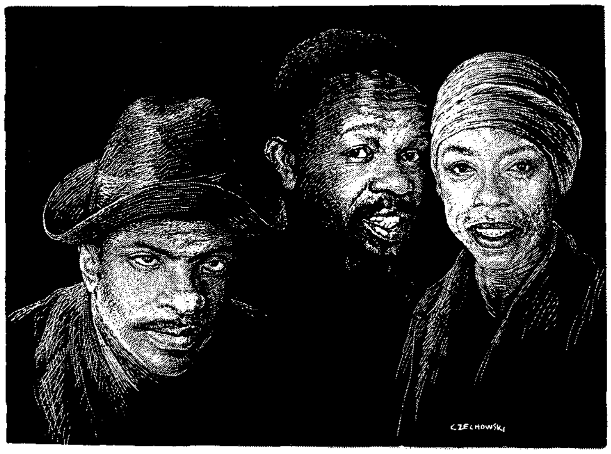
BELLA, BELLE OF BYELORUSSIA—A comedy by Jeffrey Essmann, with songs by Michael John LaChiusa. Previews through Jan. 19 at 3. Opens Jan. 19 at 7. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

BOESMAN AND LENA—Athol Fugard has directed this revival of his 1969 play. Keith David, Tsepo Mokone, and Lynne Thigpen make up the cast. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS—A production of Shakespeare's comedy, directed by William Gaskill and presented by Theatre for a New Audience. Previews through Jan. 18 at 2. Opens Jan. 18 at 8, and runs through March 14. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22			

CRAZY HE CALLS ME—Barry Miller portrays an attorney and Polly Draper an idealistic social worker in a play by Abraham Tetenbaum, which is set in the late thirties. The show was directed by John Ferraro. In previews. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)



Keith David, Tsepo Mokone, and Lynne Thigpen in "Boesman and Lena"

DOWN THE FLATS—An autobiographical play by Tony Kavanagh, which is set in inner-city Dublin. Opens Jan. 15 at 8. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

INNOCENT ERÉNDIRA AND HER HEARTLESS GRANDMOTHER—An adaptation of a novella by Gabriel García Márquez; directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Performed in Spanish; simultaneous English translation sets are available. In previews. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

INVENTION FOR FATHERS AND SONS—A play by Alan Brody. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. Previews through Jan. 18. Opens Jan. 19 at 7. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

JULIE HALSTON'S LIFETIME OF COMEDY—A one-woman show. In previews. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

SIGHT UNSEEN—A new play by Donald Margulies. Previews through Jan. 18. Opens Jan. 19 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

TWO SHAKESPEAREAN ACTORS—Brian Bedford and Victor Garber star in Richard Nelson's comic drama about the rivalry between the nineteenth-century actors William Macready (a Brit) and Edwin Forrest (a Yank). Jack O'Brien directed. The show originated in England. Previews Jan. 14-15. Opens Jan. 16 at 6:30. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE VISIT—Jane Alexander and Harris Yulin have the leads in the Roundabout's revival of a play by Friedrich Dürrenmatt (as adapted by Maurice Valency). Edwin Sherin directed. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AS YOU LIKE IT—Joanne Camp is Rosalind in this production of Shakespeare's play, directed by Anthony Cornish. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Jan. 25.)

BEAU JEST—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

BLUEBEARD—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company revives Charles Ludlam's 1970 play. (Charles Ludlam, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

BREAKING LEGS—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Ronald Maccone, Nick Wyman, and, above all, Susan Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. Karen Valentine replaces Ms. Giosa starting Jan. 21. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

CINDERELLA—The Riverside Shakespeare Company presents an English pantomime version of the fairy tale. Directed by Laura Fine. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

FIVE VERY LIVE—An evening of five one-act plays, presented by the Atlantic Theatre Company. The title work is by David Van Matre; the other plays are "The Age of Pie," by Peter Hedges; "Sure Thing," by David Ives; "Call of the Wily," by Patrick Breen; and "Wonderful Party," by Howard Korder. (336 W. 20th St. 645-8755. Closes Jan. 18.)

FREE SPEECH IN AMERICA—Essayist Roger Rosenblatt's show. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes Jan. 19.)

FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

I WON'T DANCE: STEVE ROSS SINGS FRED ASTAIRE—Mr. Ross in an "all-singing, all-playing, non-dancing" tribute. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call 688-7253.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: George Bernard Shaw's GENEVA and Bertolt Brecht's GALILEO. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART—Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Hillary Bailey Smith, Jonathan Hadary, Roxanne Hart, and Anthony Heald; directed by John Tillinger. (7/8/91) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

MAD FOREST—This Caryl Churchill play, written after a "fact-finding" trip to post-Ceausescu Romania, was directed by Mark Wing-Davey (he formerly ran the Central School of Speech and Drama, in London), and the ensemble acting in it is so wonderful that the production is definitely worth seeing, even though the play may leave you feeling that Churchill's visit (which lasted only a few weeks) and her own abiding Marxism do not quite equip her to tackle the complexities of post-totalitarian Europe. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 302-6989. Closes Jan. 26.)

MARVIN'S ROOM—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Pageant—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

Park Your Car in Harvard Yard—Jason Robards, white-bearded and padded to portliness, plays a retired teacher, and Judith Ivey is a former student who gets a job as his housekeeper, in Israel Horovitz's very funny, touching play, which is set in Gloucester, Massachusetts, over a year's time. Under Zoe Caldwell's expert direction, the performances are as near to perfection as makes no matter. (11/18/91) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Penn & Teller Rot in Hell—The dynamic duo are performing their repertoire of tricks Off Broadway. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes Jan. 19.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—Gabriel Barré, Julee Cruise, Robert McCormick, and Louis Tucci are all appealing in this light-minded entertainment, a London import that won the Laurence Olivier Award for best musical in a year when it might have gone to "Miss Saigon" (whose producer's subsequent indignation led to the creation of a new award category). The show—a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana—has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Song of Singapore—A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. Another problem: on a busy night the seating arrangements here can be extremely cramped. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

Tubes—A work by Blue Man Group. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

What About Luv?—Austin Pendleton, David Green, and Judy Kaye star in a revival of the musical version of Murray Schisgal's play "Luv." The book is by Jeffrey Sweet, the lyrics are by Susan Birkenhead, and the music is by Howard Marren. (York, 2 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Closes Jan. 19.)

Willie & Esther—Hugh Dane and Bern Nadette Stanis in a two-character play by James Graham Bronson. The work was first produced in Los Angeles, earlier this year. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

LONG RUNS

AND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND: THE KANDER & EBB MUSICAL: A musical revue, with Karen Ziemba, Joel Blum, Terry Burrell, Marcus Lovett, and Marin Mazzie. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.). . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 19.). . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. Cyd Charisse has recently joined the cast. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCE

On one level or another, the story of world dance is often a story of ghosts—of beings who, though you may never glimpse them, are indispensable to the actions of the performers before you. In American dance, that includes the administrators, who make it possible for a company to meet its payroll and to meet new audiences outside its home base. At the moment, these ghosts are not very spirited, as we learned a few weeks back when we caught up with one of them. Her name is Marcia Preiss, and she was making a whirlwind visit to New York to attend the thirty-fifth annual Arts Presenters conference, at the Hilton. As conferees go, Ms. Preiss was in the catbird seat. She works as the touring representative for the Miami City Ballet, which is directed by Edward Villella. The company is well supported, and is in steady demand both in southern Florida and elsewhere. But this year, even a dance company as healthy as Miami's is having difficulty putting together a touring schedule for the 1992-93 season. Impresarios across the country have cut back their schedules, some by as much as thirty per cent compared with the last booking season, as hearsay has it; and dance—which is particularly expensive to put on a stage—has taken a real beating.

Is it still considered important for a dance company to perform in New York? we asked. "You inevitably lose money on a New York season," Ms. Preiss said. "And it can be hard to find just the right theatre here to perform in. But New York continues to be crucial, especially in fund-raising. New York is where corporate sponsors want

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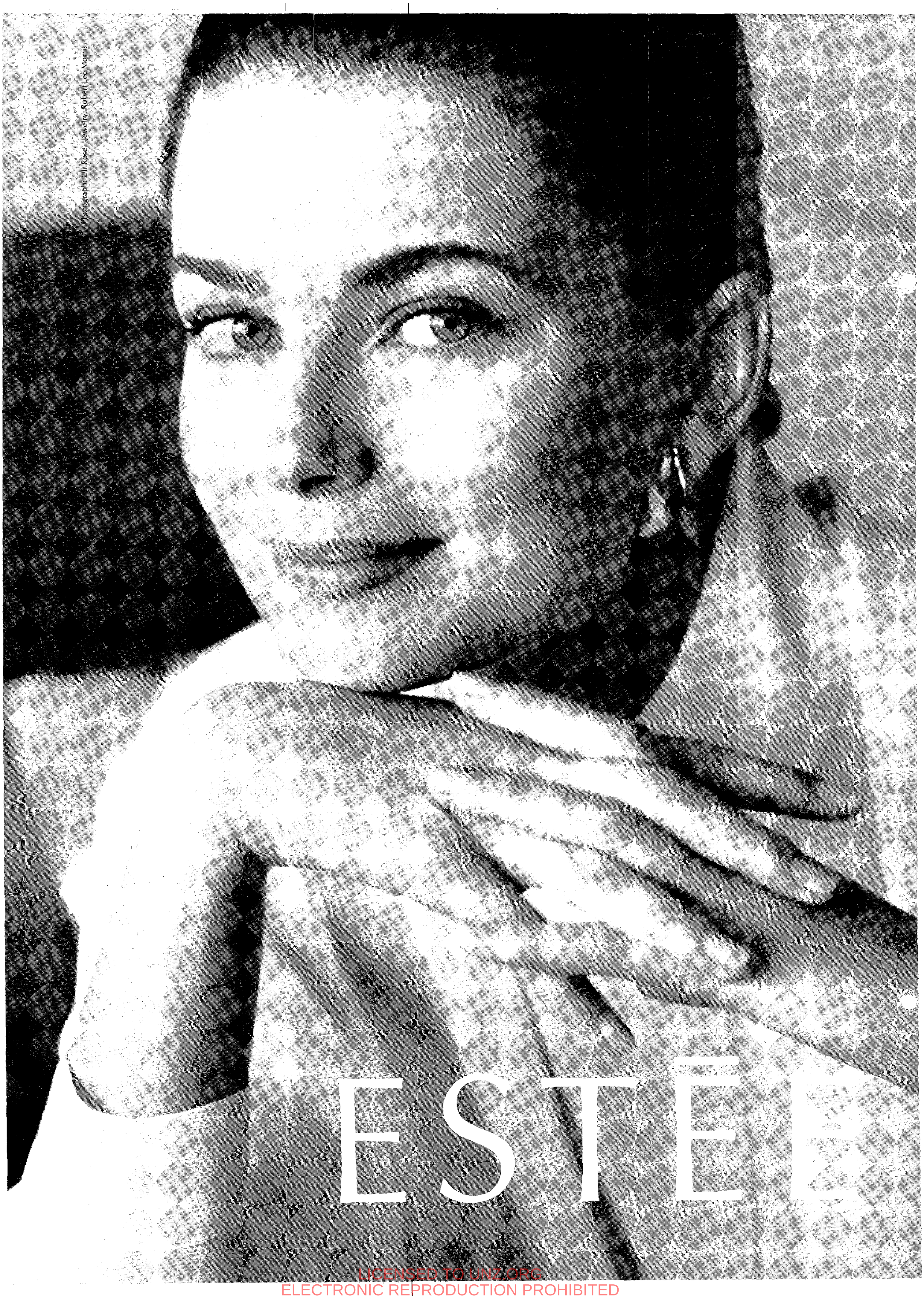

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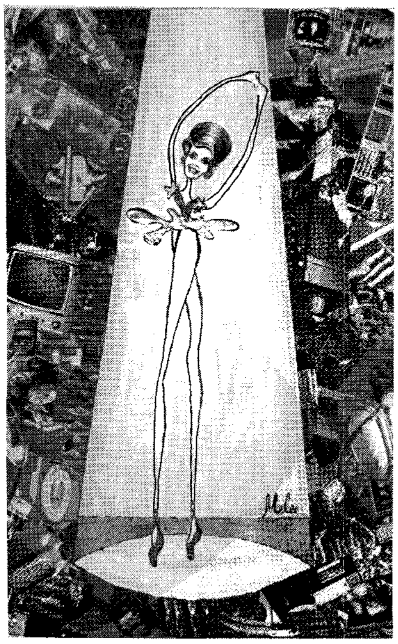
to see you, and a New York season is still a sign of a company's having arrived at a certain level. You also need it for the dancers' morale. Even so, there are important New York companies who won't have a New York season this year because they can't afford to. It's rough."

We asked Ms. Preiss about her own dancegoing background. "I began serious dancegoing in the New York area," she said. "I saw the first performance of Balanchine's 'Nutcracker,' in 1954. At that time, it was possible to be on top of everything happening in dance in the city. No two companies ever performed at the same time. You could attend every single performance of every visiting foreign company. You could see everything and remember everything." Ms. Preiss paused, then added "Maybe it's coming back to that."



Cyd Charisse in "Grand Hotel"

New York City Ballet—Jan. 14 at 8: "Scotch Symphony," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "The Concert."... ¶ Jan. 15 at 8: "Jewels."... ¶ Jan. 16 at 8: "The Chairman Dances," "Les Petits Riens," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Symphony in C."... ¶ Jan. 17 at 8: "Serenade," "Mozartiana," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Diamonds."... ¶ Jan. 18 at 2: "The Chairman Dances," "Les Petits Riens," "Monumentum Pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano & Orchestra," and "The Concert."... ¶ Jan. 18 at 8: "Jewels."... ¶ Jan. 19 at 1: "Scotch Symphony," "The Chairman Dances," "Romeo and Juliet Pas de Deux," and "The Concert."... ¶ Jan. 19 at 7: "Monumentum Pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano & Orchestra," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "The Four Seasons."... ¶ Jan. 21 at 8: "Serenade," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Concertino," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue."... ¶ Jan. 22 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "The Four Seasons." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 23.)

"Altogether Different" Dance Festival—Jan. 14 at 8 and Jan. 19 at 2: Doug Varone and Dancers.... ¶ Jan. 15 at 8: Sally Silvers & Dancers.... ¶ Jan. 17 at 8: Elizabeth Streb Ringside.... ¶ Jan. 18 at 2, Jan. 19 at 7:30, and Jan. 22 at 8: Peter Pucci Plus Dancers.... ¶ Jan. 18 and Jan. 21 at 8: Molissa Fenley. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Jan. 26.)

Iréne Hultman—Presenting "Red Cap" and "Gruff...." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 529-2318. Jan. 16-19 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

"DO you speak English?" a "Fatal Attraction"-permed blonde in her mid-thirties or so asked us outside of CBGB the other night. "Thank *God*." Actually, so did everyone else standing in front of the club, but perhaps the crowd's King's Road-circa-1977 demeanor—peacock-fan Mohawks, pierced body parts that would make a savage cringe—gave the young woman pause. "I'm from California," she said, "in case it isn't written all over my face." She and her date, a portly, bespectacled guy in a business suit, wanted to know why everyone was standing outside. Our guess, we told them, was that they either were too young to drink or didn't feel like coughing up the eight bucks to get in. For them, the sights and smells of the Bowery were entertainment enough.

Like us, however, the Californian and her date decided on the action inside, where a handful of bands were on tap. The first one we caught was Iron Prostate, who play hardcore for laughs, including songs such as "Bring Me the Head of Jerry Garcia" and one about "Gilligan's Island." Donning Gilligan masks, the band held up cue cards so that the audience could yell along: "I wear a white hat/ I wear a red shirt/ They all think I'm stupid/ One day I'll kill them." Next was Vacant Lot, a snappy Buzzcocks-Undertones hybrid, who exhorted the slam-dancing, Doc Martens-flailing crowd to have a good time but not to hurt anyone. Third was the Radicts, rather unimaginative punkers in Clash garb. After a while, we noticed our business-suited friend standing solo, craning his neck and looking worried. He'd lost his date, he told us, and thought he'd better stay in one place. We offered to keep an eye out for her if he wanted to have a look around. A few songs later, they'd reunited, but he looked as if he'd had enough. He'd found her in the dressing room, he said, hanging out with the musicians. Apparently, they all spoke English.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more *notable performers in town*.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**DAVID STALLER**, whom you may know from Broadway stages, from cabarets about town, or from the soaps ("All My Children," for example), is at work in the Oak Room. Mr. Staller's subjects here are "Noël and Cole," as in Coward and Porter. The late show on Fridays and Saturdays is "Americans Abroad," as in American composers living in London. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The club's second annual Brazilian festival is currently under way. **ALCIONE**, a big name in samba both at home and abroad, performs Jan. 14-18. The young vocalist **BEBEL GILBERTO**, who is the daughter of João Gilberto, and who appeared in the recent Carmen Miranda tribute at BAM, begins a run on Jan. 21. Shows at nine Tuesdays through Saturdays, with an eleven-fifteen show on Fridays and Saturdays.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—The free passes to this club could pave most of Greenwich Village—and they often do. The Bitter End was all abuzz in the seventies, when it was a stopping point for the sort of singers whose records you can now order from television: Gordon Lightfoot, Melissa Manchester, Neil Sedaka. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and Fridays and Saturdays at nine.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? The **DIZZY GILLESPIE** jubilee continues Jan. 14-19, with the trumpeter performing with a star-studded outfit called Dizzy's United Nation Orchestra. **CHARLES FAMBROUGH** comes in on Jan. 20. As of Jan. 21, Gillespie returns for an evening billed as "To Bird with Love"; once again, he will be in good company. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Willow, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to the celebration of youth culture. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club tends to host a lot of music-industry bashes. If you have trouble getting tickets to the early show, it's usually because some record company has bought the place out. The atmosphere here, as a result, can be weird: the record-company types have to have fun, because their own artists are onstage, but they can't have too much fun, because their bosses are watching. The later shows, though they're not as well attended and though they tend to trail off into the small hours, are much looser in spirit. Author, performer, and man-on-the-edge **JIM CARROLL** will read from his poetry on Jan. 16; the **PERSUASIONS** and **ROCKAPELLA** share a bill on Jan. 17; and **KENNY RANKIN** performs on Jan. 18. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small, peach-walled storefront. Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or café au lait and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. The café doesn't have a schedule per se, so it's often after the fact that one hears that some great Irish rocker has made a stop here. A frustrating state of affairs, perhaps, but one can have fun just hoping, waiting, and watching the door. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is now home to the **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET**. The quartet, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and which has over four hundred pieces in its repertoire, tends to play in big halls these days, so its occasional layovers in this intimate space are to be treasured. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five.... ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. **SUPERCHUNK** is here on Jan. 17, along with Sebadoh and Polvo. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A recently inaugurated club that promises to "feature only Chicago-area blues artists working with their regular Chicago blues bands." This concept may not appeal to New York blues artists, but it affords local blues aficionados a chance to hear what they've been missing.

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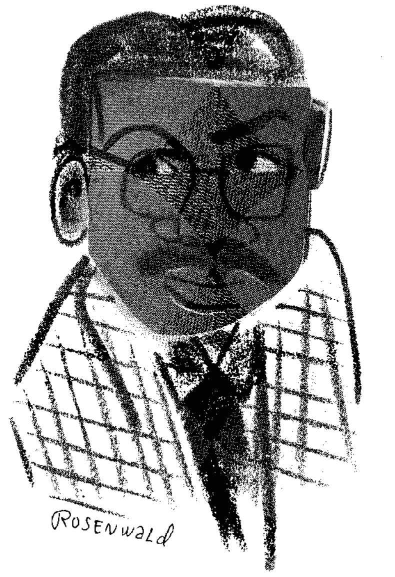


Kenny Kirkland at Fat Tuesday's

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Trombonist **AL GREY** leads a sextet Jan. 14-19. Shows Tuesdays through Sundays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty, Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one.

Diva, 306 E. 81st St. (650-1928)—This restaurant and piano bar is a modest-sized, brick-walled room that offers Italian fare and, Tuesdays through Saturdays, the musings of pianist **CHARLES DE FOREST.** Music from eight-thirty. Closed Sundays.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. A foursome led by the fiery, bluesy saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN** is in action Jan. 14-19. **KENNY KIRKLAND'S** quintet commences work on Jan. 21. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirties-ish movie set of a place that you expect gunmen to burst in at any moment. The restaurant-and-bar—forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, such as a trio that includes pianist **ARMEN DONELIAN** and bassist **JEFF FULLER** Jan. 15-18. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Judys', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—An intimate, burgundy-walled *boîte* attached to the Iroquois Hotel. In the front room, which is decorated with photos of famous Judys—and of a famous daughter of a famous Judy—a pianist keeps the happy-hour barbirds occupied. In the dining room, vocalists work out from nine Mondays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld cartoons. Up front, at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. Pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM** are on the premises Jan. 15-18; pianist **MIKE LE DONNE** and bassist **DENNIS IRWIN** get started on Jan. 22. Music from about nine-thirty.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—Spiffed-up theatre patrons walk by this club's façade—a Silver Eagle bus, with tires you can kick—and scratch their heads. Inside, big bearded guys with cowboy hats rub elbows at the bar while newcomers study the Texas memorabilia and, upstairs, the display of vintage Gibson guitars. The dining room, where bands hold sway, features a Wright Brothers-era airplane suspended from the ceiling, a dance floor where you can kick up some dust, and a balcony for quiet types. Blues and R. & B. man **BOBBY (BLUE) BLAND** is here on Jan. 14, and **BOOKER T & THE MG'S** claim Jan. 16. Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—Singer **JOAN OSBORNE,** whose praises have been sung here on a regular basis for the last year or so, recently released a great live record. The album was recorded at another of the blues singer's regular haunts, Delta 88, and consists of Osborne's own songs, as well as a soulful, guitar-based cover of "Lady Madonna" and a terrific rave-up rendition of "Son of a Preacher Man." For the most part, Osborne and her band play a bright, pop-inflected variety of blues. It's impossible not to think of Janis Joplin the first time you hear Osborne's voice, and Osborne must be tired of the comparison, because "Me and Bobby McGhee," which has been a staple in her set, is conspicuously absent from her record. (The singer also reminds one occasionally of Maria McKee.) Osborne is a talented songwriter, and her live shows—she'll be here on Jan. 15—are a wonder. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—The legends of Hoboken are many. Some of the legends are true: Sinatra did grow up here; in certain parts of the town, the air does smell of Maxwell House coffee. Some of the legends are iffy: Was the first game of baseball really played here? Does former Hüsker Dü chieftain Bob Mould actually live in Hoboken? (John Sayles, maybe, but *Bob Mould*?) At Maxwell's—which will carry on even after its namesake, the Maxwell House factory, closes its doors later this year—you won't find all the answers, but you will find bands, bands, and more bands. Sometimes you'll find as many as five a night. **CHRIS WHITLEY** will be here on Jan. 19. Dining.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district, but the dining room has more of a country-club feel. Pianist-singer Lynne Jackson and bassist-singer Mike Palter currently provide the entertainment, which ranges from Tin Pan Alley classics by Gus Kahn and "Yip" Harburg to more recent inspirations by Sondheim. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking "Is the water too warm?" Singer-pianist **BILLY STRITCH**—formerly of Montgomery, Plant, and Stritch—is going it alone here through the end of the month. Stritch has just released his first solo record, a collection of pop and jazz songs by Cole Porter, Antonio Carlos Jobim, and Michele Brourman, among others. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—A big, dark stomping ground for rock bands and their followers. **MARKY MARK** is here on Jan. 17, and **OVERKILL,** among many others, appears on Jan. 18. Shows usually begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muralled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored old tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. The sound system can be overwhelming, but the place is big enough to accommodate both those who want to lose their hearing and those who don't. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main order of business here. **CHRIS WHITLEY** performs on Jan. 21. Sets at eight and eleven weeknights, eight-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, slice-of-pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. **MUNDELL LOWE'S** quartet is in action Jan. 14-19. A trio led by **WALT DICKERSON** begins a week's stay on Jan. 21. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **MAGGIE'S DREAM** is here Jan. 16-17. **FAMILY STAND,** which will be here on Jan. 19, is a soulful, seventies-ish collective that puts on a tight, horn-happy show. The group was in the news a lot last year, because they co-wrote much of the material on Paula Abdul's latest record. Music at ten.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

MONDAY is the toughest night out everywhere, regardless of climate, culture, or sexual bias. It is an evening willingly ceded to devout hedonists, the unemployed, out-of-towners at the tail end of their long weekend, and those still young enough to suffer endorphin overload. In New York, however, these groups add up to a sizable bunch. They used to shoehorn themselves into Carmelita's, a fizzy, ramshackle second-floor den that had "Backdraft II" written all over it. Many people continue to find Tatou's amateur night entertaining, and it can be a revelation, if you've ever wondered how many ways one can sing "God Bless the Child."

A truly ingenious bit of transformation occurs on Mondays at midnight: Sugar Reef, the Caribbean restaurant, Saran Wraps its leftover conch fritters and jerk chicken, folds up its tables and chairs, and becomes Sugar Babies, the gay dance club (93 Second Avenue, at 6th Street). Glance in the window at twelve-fifteen and you'll see maybe two dozen people. Pass by at twelve-forty-five and you'd think the B-52's were giving a free concert. Few bother checking their coats, and there's hardly enough room to get your arms free, but it's a very C. & S. (cap and schmatte) crowd, so an overlayered look works. For a makeshift club, the sound system is impressive, the d.j. even more so. Novices will swear there's a smoke machine, but in fact it's merely a cigarette count that should earn Sugar Babies a letter of commendation from the city of Winston-Salem. No complaints about smoke in the face, though. Everyone seems to know everyone else. "This is like the old Boy Bar," we were told last week by one dancer wearing his shirt, sweater, coat, and scarf wrapped around his waist. We replied that that was because it felt as if you were partying in a rec room. He'd never heard of a rec room.

We left at one-thirty. It was about seventeen degrees out. There was a line of forty or so men and women waiting to get in, one of whom asked "What's it like inside? I've never been." We were about to mention the rec room again, but then we realized that this kid probably didn't even know who Marlo Thomas was, so we settled for "Great. It's great." Not an inspired response, perhaps, but what could anyone expect? It was only Monday.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Ice Capades—Skating stars and lavish sets. (Madison Square Garden. Jan. 17-19 and Jan. 22. For information about show times and tickets, call 465-6000. Through Jan. 26.)

John Jesurun—Presenting "Iron Lung," a new work. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 16-19 at 7:30. Through Jan. 25.)

"Antagony"—A new performance piece by Heather Woodbury. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. Jan. 16-17 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 7 and 9. For information about tickets, call 969-0614.)

"Book of Job"—A new work by Elizabeth Swados in which Job is, literally, a clown. (One Dream, 232 West Broadway. Jan. 15-18 and Jan. 22 at 8, and Jan. 19 at 3. For information about tickets, call 219-1160. Through Feb. 2.)

"Dialectica/Diabolico or Dog Spelled Backwards"—A new work by the performance group Purgatorio, Ink. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Jan. 16-19 at 8:30. Through Jan. 26.)

"4 Women Snuff 1,000 Points of Light"—A play by Susan Young with Gail Freund, based loosely on Peggy Noonan's book "What I Saw at the Revolution." A performance by Eileen Myles will start things off. (Wow Café, 59 E. 4th St. 460-8067. Jan. 17-18 at 9. Through Jan. 25.)

Eileen Myles—Holding a political rally. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 20 at 8.)

Dance Theatre Workshop—Jan. 16-18 at 8 and Jan. 19 at 3: Marty Pottenger presents her new play, "Dirt," which is about six dead people buried in Brooklyn. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ Jan. 20-21 at 8: Mary Beth Miller, a deaf performance artist, in "I Always Wanted to Be an Opera Singer." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

P.S. 122—Jan. 16-19 at 8: Terry Galloway in "Lardo Weeping." . . ¶ Jan. 16-19 at 9: Salley May. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Dixon Place—Jan. 17 at 8: David Cale reading and perfoming new monologues. Also with Diane Williams and Jessie Allen. . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 10:30: Frank Maya. . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 8: Holly Hughes and Mary Ellen Strom. (258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

ART

JACK PIERSON'S first full-scale solo exhibition (at Cugliani, 40 Wooster Street; through February 29) is about distressed young love. In keeping with its immortal subject, as well as with today's very mortal climate for lovers and artists alike, the show is halting, ephemeral, skittish, aethestically self-conscious in the extreme—in other words, almost flamboyantly understated. The many pieces on view include simple figurative drawings that recall sixties and early-seventies work by William Wegman and Sigmar Polke; color photographs of American scenes, such as "Miami Before the Penthouse" (1990), which look like faded fifties or early-sixties postcards blown up; wall reliefs composed of found plastic letters which conjure a skid-row Lawrence Weiner and spell out such words as "HELPLESS/HOPELESS" and "SEXLESSNESS," along with that plea of the lovelorn, "STAY"; and assemblages made of black-and-white poster images, mostly of limbs and other pictorially ambiguous body parts, which have been cut into slivers and pinned, dangling, to the walls, in the manner of an early Richard Tuttle.

Pierson, who has worked as a photo-shoot stylist—interiors, fashion—has a marvellously light touch and a pronounced talent for evocation. Almost any viewer is likely to be engulfed by the memory of some melancholy of his or her own—a song played obsessively while one was being seduced or abandoned, a filterless cigarette given up long ago, an urge to drive cross-country, an urge to sink way low. But Pierson's work is anything but depressing. Rather, with titles like "Youicide," "A: A $50 John," and "One More Lie Hollywood Told Me," he joins the writer Dennis Cooper and the filmmaker Gus Van Sant in staking out a new and lyrical genre *noir* that seems to exist on the far side of never-never land and, at least for our purposes, somewhere east of Idaho.

(A surprise assortment of more new work by Pierson can be seen at White Columns, 154 Christopher Street, beginning January 17.)

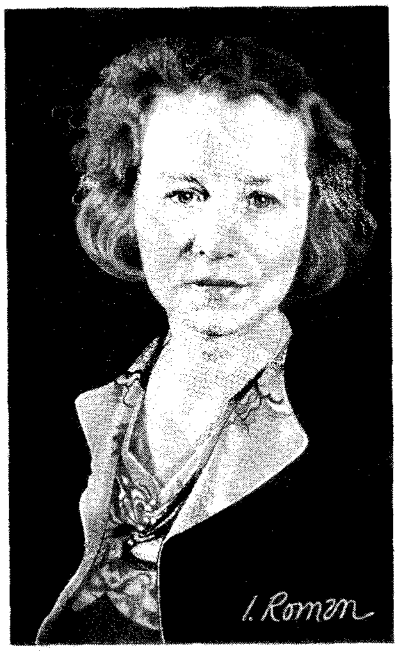
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Royal Art of Benin," a selection of nearly a hundred and fifty brass, ivory, terracotta, and wood sculptures—busts of kings, sceptres of office, side-blow horns, and other regalia—from the kingdom that flourished (from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth) in what is now southern Nigeria. Starts Jan. 16. . . . ¶ The exhibition of East Asian lacquer from the collection of Florence and Herbert Irving may be the most impeccably installed show of the year. The slaty shades of gray on the walls and the pin-spot lights positioned above the vitrines brilliantly set off the already vivid array of red and black boxes, lap desks, *sake* bottles, and such, some of which are inlaid with pearly abalone and gold. There is no fuss here, just punch. Through Feb. 23. . . . ¶ A group of Alpine landscape sketches and local genre scenes by John Singer Sargent, made during a youthful jaunt through the Bernese Oberland, in 1870. Through March 22. . . . ¶ A retrospective of the works of Stuart Davis (1892-1964), including a hundred and seventy-five paintings, murals, watercolors, and drawings. Through Feb. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A show of works by Art Spiegelman, relating to his comic-strip books "Maus." The initial effect of this densely crowded installation of storyboards, outtakes, digressions, and source materials is of an especially volatile family argument exploding right in your head. Like all traumatic dramas, this one is deeply upsetting but cathartic as well. Through Jan. 28. . . . ¶ A show of twenty-one lamps from the sixties and seventies includes a Noguchi "Akari" lamp and a Castiglioni "Taraxacum" lamp. Alas, no lava is in sight. Through March 29. . . . ¶ "Word 2 My Mother," a video installation by Tony Cokes. Through Jan. 19. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until late spring.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Celebrating Calder." Alexander Calder (1898-1976) was wonderfully inventive, and this show, which draws primarily from the museum's excellent collection of the artist's work, is a fine illustration of his breadth and depth. It begins with his delightful toylike creations—a double cat carved from a long, skinny cylinder of wood; a tiny elephant and horse made of crudely joined sheets of brass; the artist's signature wire sculptures, or, more accurately, drawings in space; and his consummate early creation, "Calder's Circus." Once Calder decided to be a "serious" sculptor, in the early thirties, he became a sponge, soaking up the work of many artists around him, learning their lessons and merging these with his own unique style. Up through the forties the exhibition is first-rate. Once it enters the era of the stabile, it slackens a bit. This may reflect the work itself, but it is also likely a reminder that, even in a stripped-down form, Calder's achievements cannot easily be condensed. Through Feb. 2. . . . ¶ Seventy multimedia works, from 1971 to the present, by Alexis Smith. Through March 1. . . . ¶ "Variations on Themes," a show of serial works in various graphic mediums, by, among others, Terry Winters, Dennis Adams, Kiki Smith, and Jasper Johns. Through March 15. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)



Edna St. Vincent Millay
(at the New York Public Library)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." . . ¶ A show of contemporary Native American works, including ceramics, elk-horn carvings, and Pomo baskets. Through Jan. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage" is a show of more than seventy pieces of furniture, art-glass windows, lights, and other decorative objects spanning sixty years of the architect's career. Through Jan. 19. . . . ¶ Two site-specific installations, one by Sam Gilliam, the other by Robert Kushner. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"From Expressionism to Resistance, Art in Germany 1909-36." A very rich exhibition, from the collection of Marvin and Janet Fishman. The show does not center on the better-known masters of Die Brücke, although many of them are represented by a work or two. At nearly every turn there is a discovery to be made, even when the works themselves are not great. Ludwig Meidner's "Apocalyptic Landscape," while perhaps somewhat derivative stylistically, is an electrifying anthropomorphic modern townscape, in which every building, rock, and tree stump is in the process of eruption. Meidner's other works can be seen as precursors of contemporary German Expressionist works by Immendorf, and, to a lesser degree, of the hero paintings of Baselitz. But the Meidner section is just one of dozens of fascinating avenues this exhibition explores. Through Jan. 26. . . . ¶ "The Sigmund Freud Antiquities." Close to a hundred of the two thousand objects the psychoanalyst collected from Egypt, Greece, Rome, and China. Even the less than extraordinary examples are full of modern meaning, such as a small steatite portrait of Amenophis I and his mother, Ahmose-Nofretiri, who, in the ultimate Oedipus complex, were buried together. The best part of the show is a series of black-and-white photographs—taken in 1938, by Edmund Engelman—of Freud's study and examining room shortly before he fled Vienna for London. They are ordinary pictures, but reveal just how Freud lived with his powerful assembly of statues: we find them jammed together in cases, perched atop various pieces of furniture, and lined up at the edge of his desk like an army of history's most exalted foot soldiers. Through Feb. 18. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

ART—Cont'd

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A group of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century *santos*—carved-wood holy objects made by family artisans in Puerto Rico. (Open daily, 11:30 to 7:30.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Hallowed Haunts," a show of seventy-three drawings and watercolors by Charles Addams (1912-88), most of which first appeared in the pages of this magazine. Through March 8. . . . ¶ An exhibition of paintings, drawings, manuscripts, and published works by Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872), the founder of the National Academy. Through March 12. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Imagining the New World: Columbian Iconography" is an amiable display of depictions of the Americas—maps, globes, books, etchings—and scientific instruments. Much of the material is of primarily scholarly interest, but there is plenty to keep the non-specialist enchanted: Ptolemaic atlases; book illustrations of two-headed babies and other New World monsters; and an etching of natives trying to capture cormorants by wearing pumpkins on their heads. There are paintings of explorer flotillas, and several portraits reputedly of Columbus himself (including one attributed to Ghirlandaio), although no two seem to depict the same man. The exhibition also includes a few benchmarks of Art History, which are reinterpreted according to discoveries made in the New World. Chief among them is Dürer's extraordinary etching of Adam and Eve, the inclusion of which is noteworthy here not only for several of its details but also for its interpretation of paradise. Also, there are a number of etchings of the baroque statuary in the Piazza Navona, in Rome, which embody the reconceptualization of the world made possible by the mapping of the Americas. Through Jan. 26. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—A large selection of manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other objects that shed light on the life of Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950). Through Feb. 29. (Berg Collection.). . . ¶ Merlin, Mordred, Gawain, and Galahad leap off the pages and prints of "King Arthur: Looking at the Legend." Through Feb. 22. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

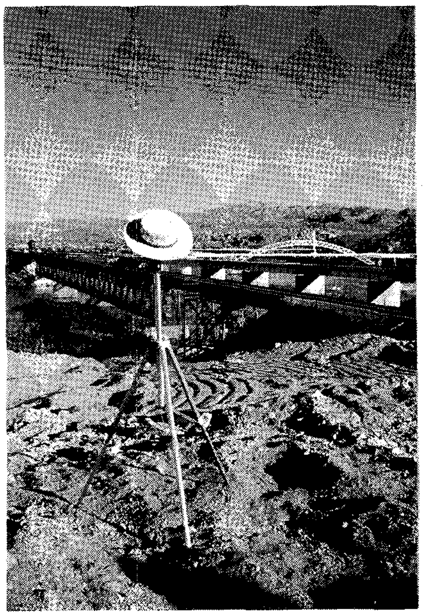
GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—glenn goldberg, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Jan. 30); **per kirkeby,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through Feb. 22); **gaston lachaise,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St (open Mondays, through Feb. 22); **man ray** and **meret oppenheim,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through March 27); **bill traylor,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 8).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Lothar Baumgarten—This German artist travelled across America and has created "Carbon," an extraordinary book of photographs of trains and photographs taken from trains, set off by simple yet highly sophisticated design elements. The book is an intelligent and modestly moving experience that conjures the history of the settlement of the United States in epic fashion. The several dozen matter-of-fact photographs in this show—depicting such details of the artist's journey as an early industrial bridge, grazing cows, factories, and the weed-filled edge of a tract—create a humbling unfolding of time warps, decay, and stillness. But the artist's true magic is found in the book itself. One of the several copies also on view is opened to a page of lists of trains, set in silvery-green type; with poetic brutality, the lists conjure the destruction and profiteering that made possible the American concept of space and freedom. Cascading rows of such names as Cheyenne Mail, Sunset Ltd., Humming Bird, and Empire Corridor vividly create a sense of the violence and glory of the settlement of America. Through Jan. 18. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)



Self-portrait by Lothar Baumgarten

Short List—milton avery, Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **jose bedia** (through Feb. 1) and **richard shaw** (through Feb. 29), Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.; **ronald bladen,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **jorge castillo** and **francisco leiro,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 1); **robert graham,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **terence la noue,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 8); **sacha sosno,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **joyce treiman,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 25).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Gregory Amenoff—Morandi, Schiele, de Kooning, Martin, and, of course, Reinhardt could sustain an entire career working within the narrowest range of possibilities, but this artist has been working in the same tiresomely narrow way for a decade and a half, and it has been far too long. He seems to have tried to expand his scope somewhat in these new drawings, adding to his Dove-Hartley kind of American abstraction a Martin-Walkowitz edge, but the work's still tedious. Through Feb. 1. (Munroe, 130 Prince St.)

Neil Campell / Group Show—The centerpiece of this show is a dizzying wall painted with large black dots of several sizes. There are a few related canvases, and these are slightly more interesting, but, by and large, this addition to the ongoing Op-art revival has no mysteries to reveal. / Included in a small project show are several small canvases by Kay Rosen, an artist who is politically impeccable and appropriately earnest, but whose work never quite develops momentum beyond its cleverness. She makes paintings of words with certain key letters omitted so that the intact word and its blacked-out version vibrate with double whammies: "FREUD," with a blacked-out "R," and a work that plays on the word "truth" titled "You Lie Through Your Teeth." Through Feb. 1. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Leon Golub—This show includes four strong new paintings that reaffirm the artist's links to the American social-realist tradition of Shahn and Cadmus. All are large, all have dried, cracked surfaces, and all, like his famous terrorist paintings, are about male aggression. In two of them, larger-than-life men grab their crotches, but the most penetrating work is the least graphic. It consists of three men in business suits and one in leisure wear contemplating with chilling detachment a fallen man, who could be either unconscious or dead. Also on view is "Gigantomachy IV" (1967), which is a dynamically crude prototype for the recent paintings. Through Feb. 15. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

Theodoros Stamos—Paintings from 1947 to 1963. Although Stamos was a member of the first generation of Abstract Expressionists, these works seem more appropriate to some second-rate member of the second generation. "The Divide #2," a dark, landscapish painting of 1958, is the strongest work, with a lyrical form and turbulent color. Through Jan. 18. (Meisel, 141 Prince St. . . . ¶ A complementary show is at ACA, 41 E. 57th St., through Jan. 18.)

Allan Wexler—There is a tortured kind of wackiness to this artist's furniture designs, which include a table and chairs planted on plots of grass, models for such things as "growing tables," and a tablecloth with four shirts sewn into it. The largest piece consists of four individually crated rooms—bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and living room—which can be wheeled into a seven-and-a-half-foot-square "shell," opened, and utilized. It is a rather useless piece of Practicalia. Through Feb. 8. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

"Stubborn Painting: Now and Then"—There has been a rash of high-minded abstract-painting shows recently, and, despite its leaden title, this is probably the best of them, if only because it is historically oriented. The show starts with the eccentric abstractions of Forrest Bess, some of the odder pathways down which Paul Feeley wandered, and three of Philip Guston's more agitated canvases, including one from 1965, when he was at the end of his dialogue with abstraction. There is a fascinating early Elizabeth Murray, from 1974, in which the germ of her later eccentricity appears in the guise of geometry. But what is to be made of the Philip Taaffe painting hanging near the Paul Feeley that inspired it, except that the younger artist has made a new, improved version of the elder's work? It is unfortunate that this show's chain of individualized abstraction tends to break apart when it reaches the self-conscious eighties. Through Jan. 25. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

"Doménikos Theotokópoulos: A Dialogue"—This show attempts to explore the affinity between certain contemporary American artists and El Greco—an unfair comparison. Jackson Pollock, the only artist here to take on the Mannerist master directly, is represented by student-like reproductions of sketches after El Greco paintings. For Beauford Delaney, who is represented by a luminous yellow painting, the affinity is one of spiritual vaporousness, and for sculptor John Ahearn the connection is even more obscure. The work that comes closest to resembling El Greco is the one that looks least like the painter's. It is a photographic triptych by David Wojnarowicz of the death of photographer Peter Hujar—haunting in its craggy buoyancy. Through Jan. 25. (Briet, 558 Broadway.)

"Drawings"—At least half of the thirty artists in this group show use the medium in an essential way: to work out ideas. But despite some fine examples—by Oldenberg, Artschwager, and Otterness—the display is oddly dull. Through Jan. 25. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Group Shows—At **nosei,** 100 Prince St.: Works on paper by eighteen artists. Included are beautiful patterned watercolors by Peter Schuyff, which in certain ways are more satisfying than his paintings; delightful and somewhat nutty coloring-book versions of St. George slaying a dragon and of a contemporary mother and child by Gian Marco Montesano; several sexy and strong drawings of helices, knots, and other suggestions of the inner body by Nancy Bowen; and a gorgeous watercolor by Stephen Mueller. Through Jan. 30. . . . **shafrazi,** 130 Prince St.: A massive show, spanning the twentieth century, of works on paper—from Kandinsky to Nauman, Matisse to Artschwager. The works fall along the entire spectrum of quality from great to bad, with frequent stops at indifferent. Among the gems are an Yves Klein body painting on paper and a beautiful Richard Lindner, but many works seem included just for their signature. Picabia, in fact, is represented by nothing but his signature, with his name printed in smaller letters beneath it, as if that were his signature's signature; if this is a work of art, it is fascinating, but, then again, it might be just a signature. There are some charged moments in the installation, such as the juxtaposition of Léger and Baechler, but there are other times when the arrangement ruins the work, as in a clump of gestural drawings by Kline, Baselitz, Marden, and Rothenberg which collapse into inky mush. Through Jan. 25.

Short List—PETER AGOSTINI, Clasen, 470 Broome St. (through Feb. 29); **JAMES LEE BYARS,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Feb. 1); **CHUCK CONNELLY,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through Jan. 25); **MOIRA DRYER,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Feb. 1); **FRANK GARDNER,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through Feb. 1); **SOL LEWITT** and **JOHN MURPHY,** Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Jan. 25); **RICHARD LONG** and **JAMES TURRELL,** Stein-Gladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through March 14); **MARIO MERZ,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through Feb. 22); **CLAIRE MOORE,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through Feb. 4); **PRUITT-EARLY,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 29).

OTHER GALLERIES

"Love on the Beat"—This four-artist collaboration—between photographer Paul Steinitz, his model Christine Mingo, painter Ivan Dalla Tana, and sculptor Zadik Zadikian—has resulted in outlandish works that are a major triumph of grandeur over vulgarity. The dozen or so works on view, a couple of which are truly humongous, consist of photographs of what appears to be a particularly bosomy Latin sex-goddess engaged in poses ranging from an odalisque to a full-out crucifixion. The photographs have been printed onto paper and cast in plaster, which in turn has been mounted in elaborately sculpted hydrocal frames. The total effect might be described as Sublime Whorehouse Baroque. By all means check it out. Through Feb. 1. (Prisunic, 409 W. 14th St.)

Short List—DENNIS OPPENHEIM, P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City (opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays; through Feb. 9); **ARTHUR RACKHAM,** Butler Library, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:45; through Feb. 19).

UP FRONT

Today's news is tomorrow's T-shirt—witness the exhibition of forty-eight T-shirts from the past year at the Fashion Institute of Technology (Seventh Avenue at 27th Street; through February 1). The rapidity with which T-shirt producers and entrepreneurs pounce on an issue touching the public nerve is nothing short of electric. The Operation Desert Storm shirts on view were on the market even before the actual military conflict began, in January. A Pee-wee Herman shirt (mug shot paired with celebrity photo) appeared in New York within a week of his arrest in Florida, in August. A Magic Johnson shirt ("We Still Love You") was out in Los Angeles within forty-eight hours of his announcement that he was HIV-positive. "If clothing is language, as the standard theory goes," says Richard Martin, who, along with Harold Koda, curated the show, "then the T-shirt is certainly rhetoric, a kind of instant declaration. Whereas much clothing tends to be about abiding things, the immediacy and ephemerality of the T-shirt allow for a fleeting expression." Noticeably absent among the issues addressed by the T-shirts—there are also swipes at David Duke, Willie Smith, and Madonna—is perhaps the most important event of 1991, the breakup of the Soviet Union. "We couldn't find a single one," Mr. Martin says. "I think that's because for us the event is not graspable in any easy way. It's big *history, and doesn't affect our lives in an immediate way."*

PHOTOGRAPHY

THERE'S something very satisfying about seeing a terrific collection of photographs all on one supposedly simple subject. The latest such pleasure available is William A. Ewing's book "Flora Photographica (Masterpieces of Flower Photography: 1835 to the Present)," published recently by Simon and Schuster. This is one of those books that one wants to keep near at hand; since we got it we've browsed through it many times, and we still feel it's too alive, too full of gorgeous and engaging content to shelve. The black-and-white and color printing are state-of-the-art, but neither that fact, nor the organization, nor the text (by Ewing) is what gives "Flora Photographica" its drawing power—it's Ewing's selection of images that makes this publication rich.

The book includes color photographs from 1940 by Edward Steichen that look more contemporary than "postmodern"; Karl Blossfeldt's monumental achievements of photographic detail and his respectful expression of the charisma of a plant's presence (1900-25); Ernst Fuhrmann's graphic victories (c. 1923); socially resonant portraits of people with flowers, by August Sander, Julia Margaret Cameron, and Louis Faurer; flowers being exploited for all their symbolic worth—a rose under the nose of Yukio Mishima, for instance, and a flower perking up each handlebar of Salvador Dali's mustache; and so on. "The Lily, Mount Kisco" (1918-19), by Charles Sheeler, and Eugène Atget's "Oriental Poppy" (c.1910-20) are enough to make one love the "copy" more than the original, so exquisite and tactile are they. All this is not to say that the book is free of shticky, less fulfilling photographs, or of formulaic approaches, but in this company such sour notes don't matter.

Invention and Reinvention—A triple show at the relocated Lowinsky gallery offers a chance to see just how broad the subject of photography can be. In one room you'll find a group of proto-photos—camera-lucida drawings by Sir John Herschel, the scientist and photographer who evokes such a powerful aura in a portrait by Julia Margaret Cameron. Then there's a room with ten albumen prints, from 1860, by Louis De Clercq. Taken in Spain, these photographs—of Moorish arches that embody more than mere architectural expression—are exquisite. Unfortunately, after making them De Clercq apparently gave up photography as a hobby. Finally, there is Sally Larsen's work. Done in 1990, in Tokyo, it looks as different from De Clercq's as one could imagine. But her pictures of a cabaret late at night echo his works: they are keyholes through which we are intimately introduced to very particular worlds. Through Jan. 18. (575 Broadway.)

Short List—LYNNE COHEN, P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through Feb. 8); **CARL GOLDHAGEN,** Esman, 575 Broadway (through Feb. 8); **HORST,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Jan. 25); **MC DERMOTT & MC GOUGH,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 1); **SHEILA METZNER,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 8) and International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Feb. 2); **FRAN SHALOM,** 55 Mercer Street Gallery (through Jan. 25); **GERARD TRAQUANDI** and **EUGÈNE ATGET,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Feb. 15); **ULAY,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Feb. 1).

MUSIC

AMONG the great works for chorus and orchestra, we cherish especially the "Missa Solemnis" of Beethoven. Musicians have always loved this work, and certain conductors who have cared for it greatly have seen to it that performances have been frequent, even though it has never been as popular with choirs and audiences as, say, Brahms' Requiem, Haydn's "Creation," Handel's "Messiah," Bach's Passion settings. The "Missa Solemnis" is a big, demanding piece: it is very long, extremely difficult for the choir to sing, and intensely demanding on the listener's concentration. There are few obvious payoffs, few hummable melodies, no "hit" excerpts. Beethoven speaks a complex, elevated language here. But nothing in Beethoven is more humane and generous. "From the heart—may it go again to the heart," he wrote on the score, and it has always gone to ours.

Toscanini was one of the conductors who made this Mass a special mission. He often included it in his Beethoven symphony cycles. Three versions conducted by him have been preserved in recordings. The most satisfying all around is the second, performed on December 28, 1940, with Zinka Milanov, Bruna Castagna, Jussi Bjoerling, and Alexander Kipnis as the soloists; it has appeared on compact disks from the Arturo Toscanini Recordings Association (CD 259-2) and Melodram (CD 38-006, with the Verdi Requiem). In the third Toscanini version, a highlight is the work of the chorus, prepared by the young Robert Shaw. Now, four decades on in his career, Mr. Shaw is specializing in some of the same works that he prepared as a youth for Toscanini. He brings something special to them. His own "Missa Solemnis" recording (made in 1988) is on Telarc (CD 80150); on January 19 at 3, he leads the work in Carnegie Hall with a specially assembled choir and the Orchestra of St. Luke's.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—LA BOHÈME, with Veronica Villarroel, Elizabeth Holleque, Bruno Beccaria, and Brian Schexnayder; conducted by Michelangelo Veltri. (Jan. 13 at 8.). . . **DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER,** with Hildegard Behrens, Gary Lakes, James Morris, and Matti Salminen; James Conlon. (Jan. 14 at 8 and Jan. 18 at 2.). . . **L'ELISIR D'AMORE,** with Maria Spacagna, Stanford Olsen, Mark Oswald, and Paul Plishka; Marcello Panni. (Jan. 15 at 8.). . . With Kathleen Battle, Luciano Pavarotti, Juan Pons, and Paul Plishka; Marcello Panni. (Jan. 16 and Jan. 21 at 8, and Jan. 18 at 8:30.). . . **DON GIOVANNI,** with Marilyn Mims, Patricia Schuman, Ruth Ann Swenson, Gösta Winbergh, Samuel Ramey, and John Cheek; Christian Badea. (Jan. 17 and Jan. 20 at 8.). . . With Carolyn James, Patricia Schuman, Young Ok Shin, Gösta Winbergh, Samuel Ramey, and Timothy Noble; Christian Badea. (Jan. 22 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

Bronx Opera Company—Presenting Carlisle Floyd's "Susannah," fully staged. (John Jay College Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 58th St. 787-1356. Jan. 17-18 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. Jan. 14 at 8: The final performance in a series of concerts dedicated by the orchestra to those who have died of AIDS, those who are living with AIDS, and those who support them. On the program are Corigliano's Symphony No. 1 (which was inspired by the AIDS crisis), Mozart's Symphony in F (K. 19a), and Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Salvatore Accardo). . . . **note:** Pianist Gerald Robbins and members of the orchestra will perform Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet in a pre-concert recital, open to ticketholders, beginning at 7. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 and Jan. 18 at 8, Jan. 17 at 2, and Jan. 21 at 7:30: Performing the New York première of "Shadows: Four Dirge-Nocturnes for Orchestra," by Claude Baker; Mozart's C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 503), featuring Christian Zacharias; and Dvořák's Symphony No. 6. . . . **note:** On Jan. 17, at 1, members of the orchestra will perform Mozart's Divertimento (K. 213) and Flute Quartet (K. 285a) in a pre-concert recital, open to ticketholders. . . . On Jan. 18, at 7, a student ensemble from the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music will perform Mozart's String Quintet in D (K. 593) in a pre-concert recital, open to ticketholders.

Jupiter Symphony—*Jens Nygaard conducts* D'Indy's "Chanson et Danse" (for winds) and Beethoven's "Prometheus" Overture and Piano Concerto No. 3 (featuring Israela Margalit, *who also performs Grieg's Piano* Sonata). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 13 at 8.)

New Jersey Symphony—The Absolut Vodka company underwrites annual concerts in which new American works commissioned by the company share the bill with speeches. This year, Hugh Wolff conducts Aaron Jay Kernis's Second Symphony, Joseph Turrin's Flute Concerto (featuring Carol Wincenc), and David Diamond's cantata "This Sacred Ground" (with the New York Choral Society and American Boychoir, in addition to the orchestra). Also on the program is John David Earnest's choral cycle "Sun Songs and Nocturnes," which will be performed by Chanticleer, a twelve-voice men's choir. (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 15 at 7:30.)

New York Bach Ensemble—The vocalists sing Bach's motet "Singet dem Herrn"; the period-instrument players perform his Sixth "Brandenburg" Concerto; and all join for his Cantata No. 4, "Christ Lag in Todesbanden." Kent Tritle directs. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 439-8044. Jan. 15 at 8.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clark conducts his own "Lines Composed in Early Spring," Piston's Divertimento, Ruth Schoenthal's "Collages," and two works by Otto Luening: Three Songs (featuring soprano Margaret Astrup) and the première of his "Symphonic Fantasia." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Jan 16 at 8.)

Oberlin College Choir and Mozart Orchestra—Daniel Moe directs Mozart's Missa Brevis in D (K. 194) and two motets, and Bridget-Michaele Reischl conducts the orchestra in the composer's Symphony No. 29 and a church sonata. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 18 at 8.)

Gregg Smith Singers—The choir presents pieces of a humorous bent, by Mozart, Schoenberg (yes, three lighthearted canons from a composer not often given to musical levity), Menotti (the New York première of his "Moans, Groans, Cries, and Sighs"), and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Jan. 18 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.)

Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis"—Culminating a week-long convocation studying this monumental score, Robert Shaw directs a large chorus (including members of his own concert ensemble) and the Orchestra of St. Luke's; with soloists Benita Valente (soprano), Florence Quivar (mezzo-soprano), Neil Rosenshein (tenor), and Alastair Miles (bass). (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 19 at 3.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Lukas Foss conducts the opening events of a three-week-long Israeli arts festival. Jan. 19 at 3: The "Masque" movement of Bernstein's Symphony No. 2 ("The Age of Anxiety," with Mr. Foss doubling as the piano soloist); Ethiopian folk songs; and music by Prokofiev, Alexander Levkovich, and others. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Jan. 19 at 3. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 7: The same program as above, augmented by violinist Shlomo Mintz and pianist Vladimir Feltsman playing works by Bach. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Artek Ensemble—Gwendolyn Toth directs instrumental music and cantatas from seventeenth-century Germany, by Johann Christoph Bach (an uncle of Johann Sebastian), Johann Heinrich Schmeltzer, Nicolaus Bruhns, and Dietrich Buxtehude. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. 602-0873. Jan. 19 at 4.)

Boys Choir of Harlem—Warren George Wilson directs Mozart's Requiem, featuring soprano Shirley Verrett, mezzo-soprano Hilda Harris, tenor Walter J. Turnbull (the choir's founder and musical director), and bass David Arnold. The concert also includes music by Scott Joplin, Fats Waller, and Duke Ellington, directed by Mr. Turnbull. A benefit concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan 20 at 7.)

Parnassus and the New York Virtuoso Singers—The instrumental ensemble and the choir present music by Ravel, Schoenberg, Jacob Druckman, Miriam Gideon, Jonathan Harvey, and Anthony Korf. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 22 at 8.)

RECITALS

Håkan Hagegård—The baritone performs songs by Schubert, Wolf, Mahler, Duparc, and Sibelius, as well as arias from "Tannhäuser," "Falstaff," and "Il Barbiere di Siviglia"; assisted by pianist Warren Jones. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 13 at 8.)

S.E.M. Ensemble—Presenting recent works by Elliott Sharp, Rhys Chatham, Ben Neill, and Petr Kotick. (Paula Cooper gallery, 155 Wooster St. Jan. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 243-0964.)

Renée Jolles and Lev Natochenny—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Schubert, Brahms, and Busoni. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 14 at 8.)

Music Today—Christopher Kendall leads the ensemble in works by David Froom, Jon Deak, and George Crumb (his "Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death," featuring baritone William Sharp). (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 15 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing music from the long career of Vittorio Rieti, ranging from his "Madrigale," written in 1927, to premières of three new works. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Jan. 15 at 8.)

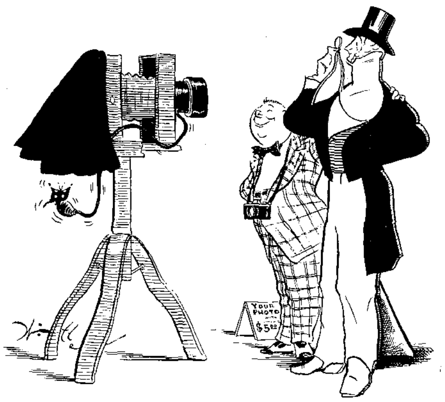
Bargemusic—Presenting chamber music by Schubert, Brahms, and Fauré (his C-Minor Piano Quartet). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Jan. 16 at 7:30 and Jan. 19 at 4.)

Felix Galimir and Jacob Lateiner—The violinist and the pianist are joined by a number of their colleagues from the Juilliard faculty and administration in solo and chamber music by Mozart. Mr. Lateiner will perform young Wolfgang's two sixteen-measure-long Minuets (K. 1e and K. 1f—which, if not his very first compositions, were at least included in his first collection of pieces, begun when he was five years old), and, with Mr. Galimir, his first Violin Sonata (in C Major, K. 6, published in Paris, in 1764, but possibly written as much as two years earlier). Also on the program are the Quintet for Piano and Winds (K. 452) and the D-Major Divertimento (K. 205), plus a curiosity: a one-movement String Quartet by the late pianist Rudolf Serkin, who studied composition with Schoenberg, in Vienna, before gaining acclaim as a performer. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Jan. 16 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Sylvan Wind Quintet—The ensemble's concert includes Irving Fine's Partita and Beethoven's Quintet for Piano and Winds (with Claude Frank). (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 16 at 8.)

Ilya Itin—In his New York début recital, the Russian pianist, who won last year's Casadesus International Piano Competition, performs Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 110, as well as works by Chopin, Debussy, and Rachmaninoff (including his Sonata No. 2). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 17 at 8.)

Emanuel Ax—Although Leonard Bernstein was both a prolific composer and a consummate pianist, he composed surprisingly little music for solo piano. In 1980, however, he wrote his "Chorale, Eight Variations, and Coda" for use in a major piano competition, dedicating the piece to "my first love, the keyboard." Mr. Ax performs this work, which was later retitled "Touches," as well Haydn's B-Minor Sonata (Hob. XVI:32), several items by Chopin, and Brahms' F-Minor Sonata. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Jan. 18 at 8.)



Waverly Consort—This year (which is the quincentenary of Columbus's arrival in the New World), the early-music group will present three concerts of music from that distant time. The first includes works by Josquin Desprez, Heinrich Isaac, and Antoine Busnois. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 18 at 8.). . . **note:** Howard Mayer Brown, of the University of Chicago, will present a pre-concert lecture. (Association of the Bar of the City of New York, 42 W. 44th St. Jan. 18 at 4:30. No tickets necessary.)

Bejun Mehta—Having performed since he was five years old, Mr. Mehta gained an appreciative following a decade ago as a prominent boy soprano. Now he's a lyric baritone, and, in the interval, he has broadened his *repertoire to include lieder by Schubert, Schu*mann, and Brahms, who are among the composers to be represented in this recital. Pianist Darren Motise assists. (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. *Jan.* 18 at 7. *For information* about free tickets, which are required, call 246-1100.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn (*in B Minor*, *Op.* 64, *No.* 2), Milhaud (his Seventeenth), and Brahms (in B-Flat, Op. 67). (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Jan. 18 at 8. *For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)*

Chamber Music Society at the Institute—Presenting Kodály's Serenade for Two Violins and Viola, Brahms' G-Minor Piano Quartet, and Chausson's "Concerto for Piano, Violin, and String Quartet." (Ukrainian Institute, Fifth Ave. at 79th St. 288-8660. Jan. 18 at 8.)

Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music—Presenting Mozart's Flute Quartet (K. 285b), Beethoven's String Quartet No. 15 (Op. 132), and the première of a quartet written last year by Eugene Phillips (whose sons Daniel and Todd alternate as the first and second violinists of the Orion String Quartet, which will perform the work). (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. Jan. 19 at 3. *Tickets at the door on the afternoon of* the concert.)

Michael Parloff—The principal flutist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra performs solo and chamber music by Bach, Blavet, Ibert, and the Czech composer Ilja Hurník; with assisting artists. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Jan. 19 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

Bartók String Quartet—Performing quartets by Ravel, Kodály, and Bartók (his Fourth). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 19 at 7:30.)

Anner Bylsma—The Dutch cellist performs Bach's Unaccompanied Suites No. 2, No. 4, and No. 6—the last on a five-stringed violoncello piccolo, which, notwithstanding its extended compass, is slightly smaller than the standard four-stringed Baroque cello (which will be heard in the others). Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. 666-0675. Jan. 19 at 4.). . . ¶ Fortepianist Malcolm Bilson joins Mr. Bylsma for two sonatas by Beethoven (in G Minor, Op. 5, No. 2; and in A Major, Op. 69), and a Sonata in D Minor by Beethoven's Austrian contemporary Joseph Wölfl. In addition, Mr. Bilson performs Schubert's F-Minor Impromptu and Mr. Bylsma offers Bach's A-Minor Partita (written originally for unaccompanied flute, but performed here on violoncello piccolo). (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 20 at 8.)

Partita—The chamber ensemble and a bevy of their friends perform Ludwig Thuille's Sextet (Op. 6, for piano and winds), Mozart's C-Minor Serenade (K. 388, for wind octet), Gounod's "Petite Symphonie" for winds, and the première of Myron Fink's Rhapsody for Solo Viola and Wind Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 21 at 8.)

Sharon Robinson and Samuel Sanders—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Grieg and Shostakovich, Beethoven's "Variations on a Theme from Mozart's 'Magic Flute'" (WoO 46), and Rebecca Clarke's Rhapsody, written in 1923, seven years after the composer moved to America from her native England. A benefit concert. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 22 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 840-1101.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

John Mellencamp—This pure product of Indiana became a rock star and an embarrassment on the strength of a cracker-barrel Heartland attitude and a string of corny, anthemic singles. Some of the hits were great bad songs ("Pink Houses," for instance), and some were simply bad. But then Mellencamp somehow managed to come out the other side of this secondhand-Springsteen mode, and he unexpectedly began to make strange, beautiful, wildly eccentric rock music. His 1989 album, "Big Daddy," stands up to Springsteen's "Nebraska" as a despairing masterpiece of the eighties, and Mellencamp's new record, "Whenever We Wanted," is a satisfying marriage of the ornery, truth-blurting songwriting of his later work and the jangling, hard-rock sound of the "Hurts So Good" years. It should sound wonderful live. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Jan. 16-17 at 8.)

Billy Taylor Trio—With Jimmy Heath. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 870-3949. Jan. 16 at 7.)

Turtle Island String Quartet—With the California Guitar Trio, Lenny Pickett & the Borneo Horns, and Nancy King & Glen Moore in a "New Sounds" concert. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Jan. 17 at 8.)

Music of Persia—Dariush Tala'i and Djamchid Chemirani. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8710. Jan. 18 at 8.)

Sweet Honey in the Rock—In a children's concert. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Jan. 19 at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 274-1948.)

Turkish Music—Group Muhabbet. (Uris Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st St. Jan. 19 at 2:30. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

"Lyrics and Lyricists"—The first program in this season's series, which looks at Jerome Kern and his many collaborators. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Jan. 19 at 2:30 and 8 and Jan. 20 at 2 and 8.)

"Heavenly Jazz"—Presenting the Kenny Davern quartet. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Jan. 19 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

The Turtle Island String Quartet

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Jan. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Calgary Flames, Jan. 16. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, Jan. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Jan. 16. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Jan. 15 at 7:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Portland Trail Blazers, Jan. 15 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Jan. 20 at 1.

Nets—Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Jan. 14. . . . ¶ Vs. the Phoenix Suns, Jan. 22. (Game time, 7:30.)

(The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Boat Show—The eighty-second annual, featuring racers, cruisers, powerboats for water-skiers, sailboats, engines, electronics, navigational equipment, and nautical fashions. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. Jan. 13-17, from noon to 9; Jan. 18, from 10 to 9; and Jan. 19, from 11 to 7. Tickets at the door on the days of the event.)

Symposium—The people at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum are putting together three days of talks, all of which address the theme of design in the twenty-first century. The speakers include Bruce Sterling, a science-fiction writer; Erik Spiekermann, a German designer of type; and Constantin Boym, a Russian architect. (Fifth Ave. at 91st St. Jan. 15-18. For a complete schedule of events, call 860-6930.)

Readings—Jan. 13 at 8: Fay Weldon and A. N. Wilson read from their own prose. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 6:30: Stephen Lang, Philip Casnoff, and Juanita Fleming read stories by George Orwell, João Ubaldo Ribeiro, and James Alan McPherson. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.). . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 7:30: C. K. Williams and Adam Zagajewski read from their own poetry. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 6:30: Samuel Menashe reads from his own poetry. (Jefferson Market Library, Sixth Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 7: Gloria Steinem reads from her new book, "Revolution from Within." (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 7:30: Senator Al Gore reads from his new book. (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

Antiques Galore—Wendy's version. (Sacred Heart School, 1 E. 91st St. Jan. 18, from 11 to 7, and Jan. 19, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the event.). . . ¶ The Winter Antiques Show. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Jan. 18 and Jan. 20-22, from 11 to 9, and Jan. 19, from 11 to 6. For information about tickets, call 665-5250. Through Jan. 26.). . . ¶ Jay St. Mark's edition. (St. Vartan's Cathedral, Second Ave. at 34th St. Jan. 17, from 1 to 9; Jan. 18, from 11 to 8; and Jan. 19, from noon to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.). . . ¶ The Double Pier extravaganza. (Piers 90 and 92, Twelfth Ave., from 52nd to 55th Sts. Jan. 18-19, from 10 to 6. Tickets available on the days of the show.)

Walks—Jan. 18 at noon: A stroll around Tribeca, sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. For reservations, call 265-2663. . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 1: A tour of little Ireland, in Lower Manhattan, led by a graduate student; sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For reservations, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 1: A sightseeing tour of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Sights include bark and berries. For more information, call 1-718 622-4433.

Memorandum—Martin Luther King, Jr., Day will be observed on Jan. 20.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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19	20	21	22			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Black Robe" (†).
Theatre 2: "Prospero's Books" (directed by Peter Greenaway), with John Gielgud.
Theatre 3: The National Film Board of Canada's Animation Festival.
Theatre 4: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).
Theatre 5: "Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.
Theatre 6: "Madame Bovary" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Life on a String" (Chen Kaige; in Chinese).

Newman Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"The Golden Coach" (1953, Jean Renoir), with Anna Magnani.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 16: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans. From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 2: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 3: "Naked Lunch" (David Cronenberg), with Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands.

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand, Nick Nolte, and Blythe Danner.
Theatre 3: "High Heels" (Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish).
Theatre 4: "The Prince of Tides."
Theatre 5: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 6: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 7: "JFK" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Strangers in Good Company" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.
Theatre 2: "Rush" (Lili Fini Zanuck), with Jason Patric and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 3: "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron), with Imelda Staunton and Saskia Reeves.
Theatre 4: "Rush."
Theatre 5: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 7: "Paris Is Burning" (Jennie Livingston), a documentary; and "Young Soul Rebels" (Isaac Julien).

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"The End of Old Times" (Jiri Menzel; in Czech).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 16: "Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup. From Jan. 17: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 3: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 4: Through Jan. 16: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans. From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 5: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Addams Family" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Father of the Bride" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.
Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle."
Theatre 3: "Rush" (Lili Fini Zanuck), with Jason Patric and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 16: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans. From Jan. 17: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 3: Through Jan. 16: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley. From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand, Nick Nolte, and Blythe Danner.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Fisher King" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: "Father of the Bride" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Let Him Have It" (Peter Medak), with Tom Courtenay, Eileen Atkins, Clare Holman, Chris Eccleston, and Paul Reynolds.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 16: "Cape Fear" (†). From Jan. 17: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 2: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Boyz N the Hood" (John Singleton).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet), with Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, Mary-Louise Parker, and Mary Stuart Masterson.
Theatre 2: "Hook" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.
Theatre 2: "Rush" (Lili Fini Zanuck), with Jason Patric and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 3: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.
Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 3: "For the Boys" (Mark Rydell), with Bette Midler and James Caan.
Theatre 4: (Matinées only) "An American Tail: Fievel Goes West" (Phil Nibbelink and Simon Wells), an animated film; and (evenings only) "For the Boys."
Theatre 5: "Naked Lunch" (David Cronenberg), with Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands.
Theatre 6: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country."

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 16: "The Addams Family" (†). From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 2: "The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand and Nick Nolte.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
Through Jan. 18: "The Station" (Sergio Rubini; in Italian).
From Jan. 19: "Hear My Song" (Peter Chelsom), with Ned Beatty, Adrian Dunbar, and Tara Fitzgerald.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"JFK" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Jan. 16: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
From Jan. 17: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Rush" (Lili Fini Zanuck), with Jason Patric, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Sam Elliott.
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 16: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans. From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 3: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 6: "The Addams Family" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Prince of Tides."

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 14: "Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America" (directed by Craig Baldwin). From Jan. 15: "Daughters of the Dust" (Julie Dash).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through Jan. 14: "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse" (Fax Bahr and George Hickenlooper), a documentary. From Jan. 15: "35 Up" (Michael Apted), a documentary.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 2: "The Addams Family" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "City of Hope" (John Sayles), with Vincent Spano, Tony Lo Bianco, Joe Morton, Barbara Williams, and Sayles.
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).
Theatre 3: "Life Is Sweet" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Jan. 16: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (1988, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish). From Jan. 17: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (1990, Almodóvar; in Spanish).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Cape Fear" (†).
Theatre 2: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 3: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 4: "Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.
Theatre 5: "JFK" (†).
Theatre 6: "Rush" (Lili Fini Zanuck), with Jason Patric and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 7: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 8: "The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand and Nick Nolte.
Theatre 9: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Fisher King" (†).
Theatre 2: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Theatre 3: "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 2: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Fisher King" (†).
Theatre 4: "Frankie & Johnny" (Garry Marshall), with Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer.
Theatre 5: "The Black Robe" (†).
Theatre 6: "Homicide" (David Mamet), with Joe Mantegna.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand and Nick Nolte.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Naked Lunch" (David Cronenberg), with Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, and Julian Sands.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Madame Bovary" (†).
Theatre 2: "Madame Bovary" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Inner Circle" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Tom Hulce, Lolita Davidovich, and Bob Hoskins.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"JFK" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Grand Canyon" (Lawrence Kasdan), with Kevin Kline.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Rhapsody in August" (†).
Theatre 2: "High Heels" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish).
Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski, in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.

Beacon, B'way at 74th. (496-7070)
"At the Max" (Julien Temple), a concert film of the Rolling Stones.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Prince of Tides" (Barbra Streisand), with Streisand and Nick Nolte.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 16: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans. From Jan. 17: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.
Theatre 3: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.
Theatre 4: Through Jan. 16: "The Addams Family" (†). From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 5: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bugsy" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-[illegible]200)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cape Fear" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8123)
Theatre 1: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 2: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Hook" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 16: "Hook" (†). From Jan. 17: "Freejack" (directed by Geoff Murphy), with Emilio Estevez, Mick Jagger, Rene Russo, and Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 3: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 4: "Rush" (Lili Fini Zanuck), with Jason Patric, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Sam Elliott.
Theatre 5: "The Last Boy Scout" (Tony Scott), with Bruce Willis and Damon Wayans.
Theatre 6: "Rush."
Theatre 7: "The Last Boy Scout."

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (Curtis Hanson), with Rebecca De Mornay, Annabella Sciorra, and Matt McCoy.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country" (Nicholas Meyer), with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, and DeForest Kelley.
Theatre 2: "Father of the Bride" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Girl" (Howard Zieff), with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis, Macaulay Culkin, and Anna Chlumsky.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through Jan. 16: "The Addams Family" (†). From Jan. 17: "Juice" (Ernest R. Dickerson), with Omar Epps.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Kuffs" (Bruce A. Evans), with Christian Slater, Tony Goldwyn, and Milla Jovovich.
Theatre 2: "Cape Fear" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Jan. 13: "Taxi Driver" (1976, directed by Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, Cybill Shepherd, and Jodie Foster; and "Italianamerican" (1974, Scorsese), a documentary.
Jan. 14: "New York, New York" (1977, Martin Scorsese), with Liza Minnelli and Robert De Niro; and "American Boy: A Profile of Steven Prince" (1978, Scorsese), a documentary.
Jan. 15-16: "The Last Waltz" (1978, Martin Scorsese), with The Band; and "Raging Bull" (1980, Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.
Jan. 17-18: "The King of Comedy" (†); and "After Hours" (1985, Martin Scorsese), with Griffin Dunne and Rosanna Arquette.
Jan. 19-20: "The Color of Money" (1986, Martin Scorsese), with Paul Newman, Tom Cruise, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Helen Shaver; and "New York Stories" (1989, Woody Allen, Francis Coppola, and Scorsese).
Jan. 21: "GoodFellas" (Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, Joe Pesci, Lorraine Bracco, and Paul Sorvino.
From Jan. 22: "There's Nothing Out There" (Rolfe Kanefsky).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Jan. 13: "Seven Chances" (1925, Buster Keaton; silent), with Keaton; and four short silent films Keaton made with Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle.
Jan. 13: (Evenings only) "The King of the Champs Elysées" (1935, Max Nosseck), with Buster Keaton; and "The Invaders" (1936, Adrian Bunuel), with Keaton.
Jan. 14: "Doughboys" (1930, Edward Sedgwick), with Buster Keaton; and "What! No Beer?" (1933, Sedgwick), with Keaton and Jimmy Durante.
Jan. 15-16: "Sidewalks of New York" (1931, Jules White and Zion Myers), with Buster Keaton and Anita Page; and three short films Keaton made at Columbia Studios.
Jan. 17-20: "College" (†); and three short silent films with Buster Keaton—"The High Sign" (1921), "The Scarecrow" (1920), and "The Goat" (1921).
Jan. 21: "The Passionate Plumber" (1932, Edward Sedgwick), with Buster Keaton and Jimmy Durante; and "The Lovable Cheat" (1949, Richard Oswald), with Charles Ruggles, Peggy Ann Garner, and Keaton.
Jan. 22: "Estrellados" (1930, Buster Keaton; in Spanish, with no English subtitles), with Keaton; and "The Buster Keaton Story" (1957, Sidney Sheldon), with Donald O'Connor, Ann Blyth, Rhonda Fleming, and Peter Lorre.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Jan. 13: "Kameradschaft" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German); and "Westfront 1918" (1930, Pabst; in German).
Jan. 14: "Victim" (1961, Basil Dearden), with Dirk Bogarde, Sylvia Syms, and Dennis Price; and "Peeping Tom" (1960, Michael Powell), with Karl Boehm and Moira Shearer.
Jan. 15: "The Rose Tattoo" (1955, Daniel Mann), with Anna Magnani and Burt Lancaster; and "The Fugitive Kind" (1960, Sidney Lumet), with Marlon Brando, Magnani, and Joanne Woodward.
Jan. 16: "This Gun for Hire" (1942, Frank Tuttle), with Veronica Lake, Alan Ladd, and Laird Cregar; and "The Glass Key" (†).
Jan. 17-18: "Rope" (1948, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart, John Dall, and Farley Granger; and "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart and Doris Day.
Jan. 19: "Stardust Memories" (1980, Woody Allen), with Allen, Charlotte Rampling, Jessica Harper, Marie-Christine Barrault, and Tony Roberts; and "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex" (1972, Allen), with Allen.
Jan. 20: "Red Desert" (1964, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris; and "Blow-Up" (1966, Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings.
Jan. 21: "Home from the Hill" (1960, Vincente Minnelli), with Robert Mitchum, Eleanor Parker, George Hamilton, and George Peppard; and "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton), with Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish.
Jan. 22: "Targets" (†); and "Paper Moon" (1973, Peter Bogdanovich), with Ryan O'Neal and Tatum O'Neal.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Jan. 13 at 2:30 and Jan. 16 at 6: "Dirigible" (1931, directed by Frank Capra), with Jack Holt, Ralph Graves, Fay Wray, Hobert Bosworth, Clarence Muse, and Roscoe Karns. . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 6 and Jan. 14 at 2:30: "American Madness" (1932, Capra), with Walter Huston. . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 3 and 6: Two programs of sections from early Russian silent films. . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 6 and Jan. 16 at 2:30: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Capra), with Claudette Colbert, Clark Gable, Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, and Alan Hale. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 3 and 6: "Chemical Valley" (1991, Mimi Pickering and Anne Johnson), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 2:30 and Jan. 19 at 5: "The Smiling Lieutenant" (1931, Ernst Lubitsch), with Maurice Chevalier, Claudette Colbert, and Miriam Hopkins. . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 3 and Jan. 18 at 5: "Strange Victory" (1948, Leo Hurwitz). . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 6: "Lady Windermere's Fan" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 6 and Jan. 18 at 2:30: "Let My People Live" (1939, Edgar Ulmer), with Rex Ingram and Peggy Howard; "The Negro Soldier" (1944, Stuart Heisler and Capra), a documentary; and "Black Roots" (1970, Lionel Rogosin), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 2 and Jan. 21 at 5: "Madame Du Barry" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 5 and Jan. 21 at 2: "The Oyster Princess" (1919, Lubitsch; silent, with German intertitles) and "The Doll" (1919, Lubitsch; silent, with German intertitles). . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 1:30 and Jan. 20 at 3:30: "King: A Filmed Record . . . Montgomery to Memphis" (1970, Ely Landau and Richard Kaplan), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 2 and Jan. 20 at 5: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932, Lubitsch), with Hopkins, Herbert Marshall, and Kay Francis. . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 5 and Jan. 20 at 2: Two documentaries by William Greaves—"From These Roots"

At the American Museum of the Moving Image, a David Cronenberg retrospective

MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

(1974) and "Booker T. Washington: The Life and Legacy" (1982). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 2: "Ninotchka" (1939, Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, and Ina Claire. . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 3 and 5: "Native Land" (1942, Leo Hurwitz and Paul Strand), a documentary.

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Jan. 13 at 2: "Gabriel Over the White House" (1933, Gregory La Cava), with Walter Huston, Karen Morley, and Franchot Tone. . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 4:15 and Jan. 14 at 8:30: "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (1966, Mike Nichols), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, George Segal, and Sandy Dennis. . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 6:45: "Our Daily Bread" (1934, King Vidor), with Karen Morley and Tom Keene. . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 9:30: "Story of a Love Affair" (1950, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian). . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 2 and Jan. 15 at 6:30: "Wild Boys of the Road" (1933, William Wellman), with Frankie Darro and Rochelle Hudson. . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 4:15 and Jan. 15 at 8:30: "In Which We Serve" (1942, Noël Coward and David Lean), with Coward, Celia Johnson, John Mills, Kay Walsh, Michael Wilding, and Richard Attenborough. . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 6:45 and Jan. 15 at 2: "The Premature Burial" (1962, Roger Corman), with Ray Milland, Hazel Court, Heather Angel, and Alan Napier. . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 4:15 and Jan. 17 at 7:45: "Faithless" (1932, Harry Beaumont), with Tallulah Bankhead and Robert Montgomery. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 2 and Jan. 17 at 5:45: "One Third of a Nation" (1939, Dudley Murphy), with Leif Erickson and Sylvia Sidney. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 4:15 and Jan. 17 at 9:30: "Blue Collar" (1978, Paul Schrader), with Richard Pryor, Harvey Keitel, Yaphet Kotto, and Cliff De Young. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 6:30 and 9: A program of films and video appearances made by Louis Armstrong between the nineteen-thirties and the nineteen-sixties. Wynton Marsalis will be present. . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 2 and Jan. 18 at 3:45: "Dead End" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 17 at 4 and Jan. 18 at 5:45: "Sanshiro Sugata" (1943, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 7:30: "Memories of a River" (1989, Judit Elek; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 2 and Jan. 20 at 4:30: "The Mission of Raoul Wallenberg" (1990, Alexander Rodnjanski; in Russian). . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 4:30 and Jan. 20 at 2: "The Distant Journey" (1948, Alfred Radok; in Czech). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 6:45 and Jan. 21 at 2: "Daniel Takes a Train" (1983, Sandor Pal; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 20 at 9 and Jan. 21 at 4:30: "Photographs" (1990, Edit Koszegi, Sandor Simo, and Andras Suranyi; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 6:45 and Jan. 22 at 2: "I Am Sitting on a Branch and I Am Fine" (1989, Juraj Jakubisko; in Czech). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 9 and Jan. 22 at 4:30: "Interpretation of Dreams" (1991, Andrei Zagdansky; in Russian) and "Private History" (1976, Gabor Body and Peter Timar; in Hungarian). . . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 9: "Sunset" (1990, Alexander Zeldovich; in Russian).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Jan. 18 at 2: "Stereo" (1969, David Cronenberg) and "Crimes of the Future" (1970, Cronenberg). . . . ¶ Jan. 18 at 5 and Jan. 19 at 12:30: "Long Live the New Flesh" (Chris Rodley), with Cronenberg, Stephen King, Martin Scorsese, and Robin Wood. . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 2: "They Came from Within" (1975, Cronenberg), with Paul Hampton, Joe Silver, and Alan Migicovsky. . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 4: "Rabid" (1977, Cronenberg), with Marilyn Chambers.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Jan. 15 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Fric-Frac" (1939, Maurice Lehmann and Claude Autant-Lara; in French), with Fernandel, Arletty, and Michel Simon. . . . ¶ Jan. 22 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Swann in Love" (1984, Volker Schlöndorff; in French), with Ornella Muti, Jeremy Irons, Alain Delon, Fanny Ardant, and Marie-Christine Barrault.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 783-6501)—Jan. 18 at 2: "Death in Venice" (1971, Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde and Bjorn Andresen. . . . ¶ Jan. 19 at 2: "Bellissima" (†).

DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD AUDITORIUM, 42nd St. at First Ave.—Jan. 17 at 6:30: "Mr. Shosuke Ohara" (1949, Hiroshi Shimizu; in Japanese) and "A Mother's Love" (1950, Shimizu; in Japanese). (For information about tickets, call 752-0824.)

DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Jan. 14 at noon: "Perceval" (1978, Eric Rohmer). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at noon: "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975, Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones), with Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Gilliam, Eric Idle, Jones, and Michael Palin.

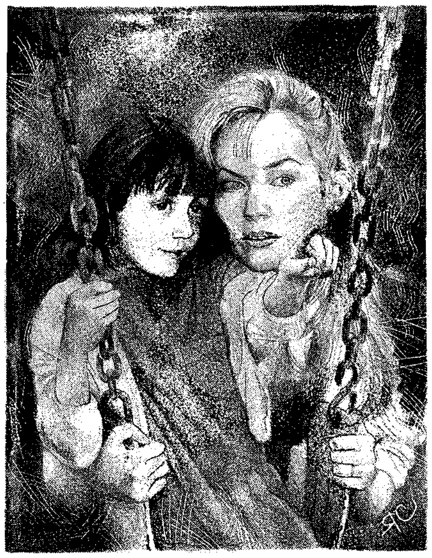
WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"From Object to Subject: Documents and Documentaries from the Women's Movement." Jan. 14-15 at 2: "Growing Up Female" (1971, Julia Reichert and James Klein), "Fifty Wonderful Years" (1973, Optic Nerve), and "Nun and Deviant" (1976, Nancy Angelo and Candace Compton). . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 6:10: "Makeout" (1972, New York Newsreel) and "Not a Pretty Picture" (1975, Martha Coolidge). . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 2: "Healthcaring: From Our End of the Speculum" (1976, Denise Bostrom and Jane Warrenbrand), "It Happens to Us" (1972, Amalie R. Rothschild), and "Birth Film" (1972, Susan Kleckner). . . . ¶ Jan. 17-18 at 2: "Nana, Mom and Me" (1974, Rothschild), "Always Love Your Man" (1974, Cara De Vito), and "Daughter-Rite" (1978, Michelle Citron). . . . ¶ Jan. 19 and 21 at 2: "The Emerging Woman" (1974, Women's Film Project), "Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman" (1974, Judy Collins and Jill Godmilow), and "Union Maids" (1975, Julia Reichert, James Klein, and Miles Mogulescu). . . . ¶ Jan. 21 at 6:10 and Jan. 22 at 2: "Dyketactics" (1974, Barbara Hammer) and "The Amazon Festival" (1977, Santa Cruz Women's Media Collective).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

THE ADDAMS FAMILY—Misguided graveyard slapstick. One of the most pungent things about Charles Addams' cartoons is the up-front matter-of-factness of their macabre incongruities. The "everyday" contexts (kids playing, carollers carolling) and the devilish twists (a doll set on a guillotine, a cauldron aimed at the carollers) come at the reader all at once. Drawing on the mid-sixties ABC-TV show, which first named the characters who inhabit Addams' stately mansion, the director, Barry Sonnenfeld, and the screenwriters, Caroline Thompson, Larry Wilson, and the uncredited Paul Rudnick, re-create Addams' famous drolleries. But they never find their own equivalent to his suave, sneaky-gleeful subversiveness. Even lying flat on the page, Addams' cartoons have better timing. The moviemakers reintroduce Morticia (Anjelica Huston), Gomez (Raul Julia), and their children, Pugsley (Jimmy Workman) and Wednesday (Christina Ricci), then welcome back Uncle Fester (Christopher Lloyd) in the form of a character who may not be the real ghoul. It's sitcom stuff, catalyzed by routine types: Gomez's shyster lawyer (Dan Hedaya) and the lawyer's loan shark (Elizabeth Wilson). A couple of actors rise above the script. Ricci is uproarious as Wednesday. She has a supernal stillness, and everything she does is skewed; she gets her effects from some other world. Huston pulls off an ultra-refined yet lowdown delivery. Too bad her dialogue is so predictably mordant; by the end, the reverse clichés turn back into clichés. Co-starring the hand of Christopher Hart as Thing.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Orpheum VII, and Waverly. . . . ¶ Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza; through Jan. 16.)



Madeline Zima and Rebecca De Mornay in "The Hand that Rocks the Cradle"

AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS OF THE LORD—Hector Babenco's film, which is based on Peter Matthiessen's 1965 novel of the same name, feels lifeless right from the start, and it perks up only occasionally in the course of the three hours and ten minutes it takes to tell its story. The movie is set in the Amazon basin, and it's about the destruction of an Indian tribe by a combination of capitalist greed (in the form of the local authorities) and cultural insensitivity (in the form of Protestant missionaries from America). Matthiessen's epic may have held some surprises for its mid-sixties readers, but its ideas have since lost a lot of their power and all their freshness. The dramatic conflicts aren't very complex, and most of the characters are one-dimensional, instantly readable. Yet Babenco treats every scene as if it contained infinite riches: he draws out simple actions, reiterates obvious ideas, lingers on the faces of characters who have no more secrets to yield up. Among the actors—a high-powered group that includes John Lithgow, Tom Berenger, Kathy Bates, and Daryl Hannah—only Aidan Quinn, as a young missionary who learns to respect the Indians' culture, comes through at all. An air of fatigue and defeat pervades the picture. The effort that Babenco and his actors have put into dramatizing this material is heartbreakingly apparent, yet, no matter how hard they work, the scenes refuse to play, and the movie never manages to generate any real momentum. It's an honest, well-intentioned flop. Screenplay by Babenco and Jean-Claude Carrière.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/16/91.) (Beekman, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and Metro Cinema.)

Bellissima (1951)—It is said that this Luchino Visconti film (it was his third) was conceived when the director was looking for a child actress for a different production and found himself surrounded by four thousand mothers, each shouting "Mine is *bellissima*!" The film is a satirical view of the movie-studio world of Cinecittà, and is also perhaps Visconti's warmest comedy. It's full of contradictory impulses, and is marred by a too pat ending glorifying the wisdom of the common people, but at its center is the great Anna Magnani as a screen-struck mother, determined to make a star of her plain little five-year-old (Tina Apicella). Magnani enters the child in a contest to find "the prettiest child in Rome"; there is a devastating sequence when the mother, who has finagled her way into the screening room where her daughter's screen test is being run, is listening to the laughter—Magnani is at her most extraordinary. With Alessandro Blasetti, a highly respected director and precursor of neorealism, playing himself, but with overtones of Visconti. And with Walter Chiari and Gastone Renzelli. From a script by Suso Cecchi d'Amico, Francesco Rosi, and Visconti, based on a story by Cesare Zavattini. The assistant directors were Rosi and Franco Zeffirelli. In Italian.—P.K. (Brooklyn Museum; Jan. 19.)

Black Robe—An unusual and absorbing new film about North American Indians and a French Jesuit missionary in the early seventeenth century. It's a culture-clash drama in which the most important conflicts take place in the realm of the spirit. The main characters are an excruciatingly pious young priest called Father Laforgue (Lothaire Bluteau) and an Algonquian chief named Chomina (August Schellenberg). Their world views are so radically opposed that at times the two men seem unable to acknowledge each other as human. The screenwriter, Brian Moore, and the director, Bruce Beresford, show extraordinary respect for the stubborn, almost impenetrable otherness of their historical characters. The film is an adventure story in the truest sense: the filmmakers lead us into unknown territory, and keep pushing us farther and farther on, until, by the end, we find ourselves deep in the wilderness of the seventeenth-century consciousness. Bluteau's performance is enervated, but the script is superbly intelligent, the direction is confident, and Schellenberg's Chomina is magnificent. The picture moves on a steady, powerful flow of ideas and emotions, and it stirs in us a sense of discovery. Based on Moore's 1985 novel of the same name. Also with Aden Young, Sandrine Holt, and Tantoo Cardinal. Cinematography by Peter James.—T.R. (11/18/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

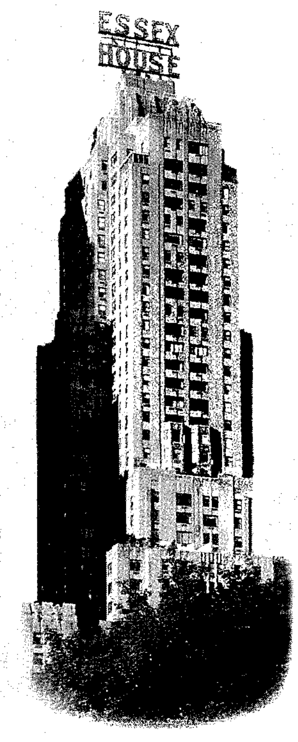
Bugsy—This opulent period gangster movie, written by James Toback and directed by Barry Levinson, is largely a showcase for the old-fashioned star magnetism of Warren Beatty, who plays the legendary Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. The screenplay portrays Bugsy as a charming, mercurial psychopath with a rather touching taste for glamour; it concentrates on the last few years of the hero's life, when he became a Hollywood celebrity and built the first hotel-casino in Las Vegas. He's a vivid, unpredictable, one-of-a-kind guy, and the filmmakers seem to realize that they can't take their eyes off him for a second. Siegel is a fascinating monster; we don't want to take our eyes off him, either. This is a rich role for Beatty, and he tears into it hungrily. It's the best kind of star performance: Beatty seems entirely himself, but in a new way. He's ferociously, mesmerizingly funny. Annette Bening plays Bugsy's lover, the tough, wily, independent-minded mob courtesan Virginia Hill, and she more than holds her own in her scenes with the star. And the movie is filled with pungent, memorable supporting performances. Ben Kingsley brings a surprisingly dry, elegant sense of comic timing to his portrait of sober Meyer Lansky (one of the hero's partners in the New York mob). Harvey Keitel, as Mickey Cohen, Bugsy's right-hand man in Los Angeles, spits out his profane lines as if they were live firecrackers. Elliott Gould plays the tiny role of Harry Greenberg, an aging, flabby mob schlemiel, and he's absolutely inspired; he plays this dazed character as a Willy Loman who has wandered too far from the old territory. Despite its lavish surface, this is essentially a movie of small, lovingly crafted pleasures. It's smart, swanky fun.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Cape Fear—Martin Scorsese's new film is a remake of a bluntly effective 1962 thriller about a middle-class family—husband, wife, teen-age daughter—who are terrorized by a devious, implacable psychopath. The original (which was based on a pulp novel by John D. MacDonald and directed by J. Lee Thompson) had the straight-ahead construction of a horror movie, and it never pretended that what it was doing was good for us. The remake muddies the waters with self-consciousness: Scorsese and the screenwriter, Wesley Strick, have loaded the movie with apparent moral ambiguities, facile ideas about guilt and redemption, and explicit attempts to portray the scuzzy villain as a mythic nemesis. This picture is much flashier and more assaultive than the original. But the Christian/mythological subtext that Scorsese dredges up and places in the foreground has the effect of increasing our emotional distance from the story. Besides, it isn't true subtext; it's stuff that has been imposed on, rather than discovered in, the material. This is still, at heart, a picture whose sole aim is to give its audience huge, bowel-loosening shocks; the veneer of moral seriousness and psychological complexity that Scorsese brings to the enterprise feels like an attempt to convince himself that he's not doing what he's doing. This is Scorsese's worst picture—an ugly, incoherent piece of work. With Robert De Niro (frenetic but thoroughly uninteresting as the villain), Nick Nolte, Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis, and Illeana Douglas. Joe Don Baker, playing the small part of a private detective, gives the liveliest performance; he's so good that you wish he were playing De Niro's role. The stars of the 1962 version, Robert Mitchum and Gregory Peck, make brief appearances, and the score is a reorchestration of Bernard Herrmann's original music.—T.R. (12/2/91) (Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through Jan. 16.)

College (1927)—A beautiful little comedy. Buster Keaton is a bookworm, working his way through college and determined to become a star athlete. The story line isn't as miraculously fresh as in a couple of his other films, but it allows for some of his most startlingly inventive stunts. Despite the many pilferings from this film (it has been a gold mine for other comedians), the routines are executed so precisely and with such an air of confident innocence that they are charged with surprise—and probably will be forever. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 17-20.)

Dead End (1937)—The setting of Sidney Kingsley's once celebrated play is a dead-end street on the East River, where an expensive apartment house towers over the slums; the play is about the confrontations of rich and poor, and it features a gang of streetwise kids and a gangster, bred there, who comes back for a visit. (The film was advertised as "Dead End, Cradle of Crime.") The movie has the ambience of Broadway social consciousness of the thirties, which, like the beautifully engineered plot, is highly entertaining. Humphrey Bogart is the gangster—Baby Face Martin—with Allen Jenkins as his sidekick, Claire Trevor as his old girlfriend who has turned whore, and Marjorie Main (before her Ma Kettle days) as his mother. The contrasting characters of the poor and honest lovers are played by Sylvia Sidney and Joel McCrea (who is almost tempted away by Wendy Barrie). And the thieves who steal the picture are the Dead End Kids: Gabriel Dell, Leo Gorcey, Huntz Hall, Billy Halop, Bobby Jordan, and Bernard Punsley. Directed by William Wyler; cinematography by Gregg Toland; screenplay by Lillian Hellman.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Jan. 17-18.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost



ANNOUNCING THE
RETURN OF A NEW YORK
TREASURE.

AFTER A TWO-YEAR RENOVATION,
THE GRAND NEW
ESSEX HOUSE HAS REOPENED
ON CENTRAL PARK SOUTH.
WHETHER YOU RECALL THE HOTEL
AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS GLORY
OR YOU SIMPLY REMEMBER
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inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor, Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. Also with Julie Delpy, Andre Wilms, Halina Labonarska, and Rene Hofschneider. The real Salomon Perel appears, as himself, in the movie's final scene. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Quad Cinema.)

Father of the Bride—This scene-by-scene remake, with Steve Martin in the Spencer Tracy role of the father racking up debts to give his daughter a big marital sendoff, is less credible and crunchy than the 1950 Vincente Minnelli production. The story was always just a mildly satirical ode to middle-class patriarchy and the idea of Daddy's Little Girl (Elizabeth Taylor then, Kimberly Williams now). But Minnelli knew how to use Tracy's weathered mug and stout, combative stance to get laughs and to suggest real experience. The old movie has a plush-covered deadpan. The Disney/Touchstone update, by the team of Charles Shyer and Nancy Meyers (he directs, they co-wrote), is sappier and sillier. Martin doesn't only play straight, he plays square. (For those who loved him in "Parenthood," here's "Daddyhood.") He turns into a scowler, while Diane Keaton, as his wife, is a beamer. She switches from high beams to low beams, and sometimes gets stuck in between. The Shyer/Meyers additions explain or fudge the retro material: Martin is a conservative sneaker manufacturer who brags that his town hasn't changed in twenty-five years; Williams shoots hoops and vows that she won't become a fifties housewife. Still, the movie peddles expensive nostalgia. Martin's character ends up spending two hundred and fifty dollars a head for hundreds of wedding guests and believing it's the right thing to do. Clips from this version could pop up in commercials for "international" instant coffees—the ones urging viewers to "celebrate the moments of your life." Martin Short is surprisingly wearisome as a wedding coordinator.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Gramercy, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Olympia, and Embassy.)

The Fisher King—This hundred-and-thirty-seven-minute endurance test is the story of a former New York City "shock jock" (Jeff Bridges) who befriends a schizoid former medievalist (Robin Williams) and joins his quest for the Holy Grail. The gonzo filigree of the director, Terry Gilliam, surrounds this fable of redemption with pseudo-originality. The allusion-mongering of the writer, Richard LaGravenese, gives it delusions of grandeur. At heart, the film is no different from a whole string of Hollywood movies centering on mysterious madmen who may be legendary heroes. As usual for this drippy kind of film, Williams' throwback character, Parry—short for Parsifal—is supposed to inspire everybody with his virtuous whimsies. But Gilliam doesn't know how to give the fantasy any sentimental charm, and he's hell on the actors, including Mercedes Ruehl as Bridges' earthy lover and Amanda Plummer as Williams' gawky amorous ideal. They mug; Gilliam takes mug shots. The movie is a peculiarly irritating failure—a leaden piece of uplift.—M.S. (Eastside Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

The Glass Key (1942)—Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake, and Brian Donlevy in a not particularly memorable, though reasonably faithful, version of the Dashiell Hammett novel. Stuart Heisler directed, from Jonathan Latimer's screenplay.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 16.)

Hook—Steven Spielberg's film means to give a contemporary spin to J. M. Barrie's classic "Peter Pan." The movie is a failure in almost every way, but it's unmistakably of our time: its lack of conviction and its panicky eagerness to please are depressingly up-to-the-minute. The script, by Jim V. Hart and Malia Scotch Marmo, presents Peter Pan as a grown-up American family man named Peter Banning (Robin Williams). Banning, a yuppie corporate lawyer, has no idea that he was ever Peter Pan, and he's so wrapped up in making money that he neglects his wife and kids. The movie contrives to send him back to Neverland, where he rediscovers his former identity and does battle with his old nemesis, Captain Hook (Dustin Hoffman). The filmmakers seem unable (or unwilling) to keep their mind on the business of telling a rousing, fantastic adventure. They use up their energy and our patience in scattershot attempts to appeal to every conceivable audience. The whole sorry spectacle turns out to be a kind of self-help fairy tale, an illustrated lecture on finding the inner child. The picture is full of special-effects "magic," but the tricks feel strained; we're constantly aware of the anxiety and the backbreaking effort it's taking to produce them, and that's no kind of magic at all. Spielberg's inventiveness has a desperate quality here; the movie seems drenched in flop sweat. In this version of "Peter Pan," the imagination feels like a burden—a terrible, crushing obligation. Also with Maggie Smith, Julia Roberts, Bob Hoskins, Dante Basco, Caroline Goodall, Charlie Korsmo, and Amber Scott. The running time is two hours and fifteen minutes.—T.R. (12/30/91) (Movieland 8th St. Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Coronet, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Six-plex, and Criterion Center.)

At MOMA, Maurice Chevalier and Claudette Colbert in "The Smiling Lieutenant"

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a countroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture has the frenzied tone of tabloid television; it plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The movie finally seems as muddled and as hastily thrown together as the Warren Commission Report. The clearest sounds we hear in this picture are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators: Tommy Lee Jones, Joe Pesci (an abominable performance), Donald Sutherland, Kevin Bacon, Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, John Candy, Walter Matthau. Garrison himself does a brief turn as Chief Justice Warren.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews Columbus Circle.)

The King of Comedy (1983)—Robert De Niro plays Rupert Pupkin, a grossly insensitive, coldhearted deadhead who is determined to become a TV star like his idol, the comic Jerry Langford, played by Jerry Lewis. The director, Martin Scorsese, must have decided to give us the cold creeps; the shots are held so long that we look for more in them than is there. Scorsese designs his own form of alienation in this mistimed, empty movie, which seems to teeter between jokiness and hate. It's "The Day of the Locust" in the age of television, but with a druggy vacuousness that suggests the Warhol productions of the sixties. With Sandra Bernhard as the hysterical Masha, who helps Pupkin kidnap Langford. (Pupkin's ransom demand is a ten-minute guest appearance on Langford's late-night talk show.) Also with Diahnne Abbott as the bartender Rita and Shelley Hack as a secretary. From a script by Paul Zimmerman.—P.K. (8th St. Playhouse; Jan. 17-18.)

Life Is Sweet—In this wonderful new comedy, the English writer and director Mike Leigh ("High Hopes") takes us into the domestic life of a lower-middle-class family in Middlesex. The characters are, by conventional standards, ordinary, but they aren't dreary, and their actions aren't predictable; the movie doesn't treat anyone as a type. Wendy (Alison Steadman) is an attractive, ebullient middle-aged woman who's always on the move, always doing something. Her husband, Andy (Jim Broadbent), is an amiable dawdler, a guy who starts ambitious home-improvement projects and never quite gets around to finishing them. They're the parents of a ludicrously mismatched set of twins: Natalie (Claire Skinner), a quiet, serious, dignified girl; and Nicola (Jane Horrocks), who hates her life and responds with snarls and contemptuous epithets to even the most innocuous attempts at conversation. Leigh doesn't give us an obvious narrative hook—a clear sense of what the story is going to be about or what sort of dramatic revelations he might have in store for us. And, despite Nicola's bratty outbursts, the tone is light and casual. Leigh doesn't manipulate our responses; he roughs them up a little, though. By means of a dense texture of tiny behavioral details and disconcerting shifts of style, he attempts to reshuffle our emotions. He prepares us to accept the moments of piercing, almost miraculous clarity that arise, as if by accident, at the end of his best films. In this picture, he builds up to a conversation between Wendy and Nicola that is perhaps the most extraordinary scene in recent movies. Also with Stephen Rea and Timothy Spall.—T.R. (11/4/91) (Quad Cinema.)

Madame Bovary—Calling writer-director Claude Chabrol's adaptation of the Flaubert classic Masterpiece Theatre-style moviemaking is unfair to Masterpiece Theatre: the BBC mini-series starring Francesca Annis and Tom Conti had more humor, grit, and oomph. This is the Classics Illustrated comic-book version. In two hours and eight minutes, it trots through the central plot, conveying key dialogue, descriptions, and contrasts in linked vignettes and verbal bits that would fit into thought balloons. A narrator captions what the adapter fails to picture or dramatize. Isabelle Huppert is disastrous casting in the title role. Flaubert divulged Emma Bovary's

Chic and democratic, hip and lyrical, "the Lubitsch touch" expresses a warm, generous kind of knowingness. Ernst Lubitsch, that most sophisticated of filmmakers, was dedicated to letting every viewer feel in the know. A week-long tribute at the Museum of Modern Art offers Lubitsch lovers a chance to see the whorls of the Lubitsch touch develop in three Berlin-made silents from 1919, "The Oyster Princess," "The Doll," and "Madame Du Barry" (all playing January 18 and 21); in his 1925 Hollywood production of "Lady Windermere's Fan" (January 17 and 23); and in his 1931 musical farce "The Smiling Lieutenant" (January 17 and 19). The salute closes with two legendary comedies, "Trouble in Paradise" (1932, January 19 and 20) and "Ninotchka" (1939, January 20 and 23). They prove that Lubitsch was the perfect director to bring worldly humor and romance to their apex: in his films, frivolity and love-play are inseparable from humanity.

Little-seen silents like the exuberant, turbulent French court epic "Madame Du Barry" and the suave comic soaper "Lady Windermere's Fan" do more than display Lubitsch's fondness for dark-haired beauties with dramatic eyes and rosebud mouths (Pola Negri in "Du Barry," May McAvoy and Irene Rich in "Fan"). They also show off his gift for blending high style and native wit. In "Du Barry" (a.k.a. "Passion") he found an ideal Lubitsch antiheroine: a working-class scrambler who learns that in Paris you do as the Parisians do. Even when Louis XV kisses her toes and clips her fingernails, she remains, to her peril, a good-hearted (if amoral) girl playing sexual hopscotch. The way Lubitsch reshapes "Lady Windermere's Fan," it's part Oscar Wilde and part "Stella Dallas." Unlike Wilde, Lubitsch reveals almost immediately that Mrs. Erlynne (Rich), the mysterious beauty with the strange designs on Lord Windermere (Bert Lytell), is the long-suffering, scandal-scarred mother of Lady Windermere (McAvoy). Ronald Colman as Lord Darlington is devilishly debonair. But the triumph belongs to Lubitsch, who mingles satirical elegance and melodramatic gusto. He keeps an audience on tenterhooks without leaving a scratch.

oscillations via her eyes, but Huppert's less-than-divine orbs remain impassive even when she's supposed to be galvanizing. At one point, the narrator emphasizes the "hellish recklessness" and sensuality in Emma's gaze as she tries to compel her lover Leon (Lucas Belvaux) into committing embezzlement. Yet all we see is Huppert glaring at him with mercenary intent. It's as if Chabrol were banking that viewers will disregard the evidence of their own eyes. With Jean-François Balmer as Charles Bovary, Christophe Malavoy as Rodolphe Boulanger, and Jean Yanne as Monsieur Homais. In French.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

My Own Private Idaho—This new feature by the independent filmmaker Gus Van Sant is like an exploded version of his previous films "Mala Noche" and "Drugstore Cowboy," and it scatters meanings all over the landscape. It's a beautiful disaster, like a bomb test in the middle of nowhere. The movie is set primarily in Van Sant's familiar territory—the seedier parts of Portland, Oregon—and its main characters are a pair of young hustlers, Mike (River Phoenix) and Scott (Keanu Reeves), who sell their bodies on the street. Mike is a narcoleptic: every time he blacks out, he has lyrical dreams composed of imagery from his childhood. Scott, who is the son of Portland's mayor, is modelled on Shakespeare's Prince Hal; the Falstaff character here is a scruffy gay cokehead called Bob (William Richert), and his scenes with Scott are stylized variations of incidents from both parts of "Henry IV" (hence also variations on Orson Welles' "Chimes at Midnight"). Van Sant takes a lot of chances, and visually the movie is so imaginative, so fiercely alive, that it carries us along. But when the over-all design of the picture becomes clear, we feel cheated rather than enlightened. Scott turns into a villain; Bob is ennobled as a symbol of outlaw freedom; and Mike takes on the aura of a holy fool, the Prince Myshkin of the Portland meat market. Van Sant's vision is disappointingly trite and schematic. Phoenix, however, gives a remarkably intelligent and intuitive performance.—T.R. (10/7/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Rhapsody in August—These days, people are more interested in Kurosawa than he is in being Kurosawa. With this weak, tepid brew of message movie and family drama, the sensei moves further away than ever from his trademark imagistic energy toward the contemplative style of previous Japanese masters. (Even the title recalls Ozu.) In this trigenerational story, four children vacation with their grandmother (Sachiko Murase) in the country outside Nagasaki while their parents visit a granduncle and his half-American son (Richard Gere), in Hawaii. Kurosawa shows none of Ozu's ability to particularize and intensify domestic happiness and heartbreak. The few memorable shots come when the kids, weaned from television, see nature through the poetry of their grandmother's household lore. When they become obsessed with the Nagasaki A-bomb, which killed their grandfather, everything turns preachy and disingenuous. (Even American college T-shirts take on an editorial slant.) Gere plays a Yankee who speaks Japanese and empathizes with his Asian relatives. Kurosawa wants to transcend anti-Americanism; the grandmother says that War, not the Bomb, is the problem. But no one raises the question of why wars start. This movie's pacifism is a pacifier. Kurosawa wrote the script, from a novel by Kiyoko Murata; Takao Saito and Masaharu Ueda did the cinematography. In Japanese.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Strangers in Good Company—It takes a skilled, intuitive filmmaker to give audiences the illusion—and the pleasures—of unstructured time. That's what first-time feature director Cynthia Scott does in this unusual, documentary-flavored portrait of seven senior women and a female tour-bus driver stranded in the gorgeous, unpopulated Mont Tremblant region of Quebec. Scott uses non-professional performers and draws on their real lives to flesh out this enticingly calm survival drama. The movie's laid-back bliss compensates for its poky, awkward spots. Scott's attitude toward old age is restorative. She doesn't turn her heroines into spiritual icons. Their stamina and senses may have diminished, but experience hasn't smoothed the edges off their characters. As they bond in a persuasive, unforced way, their thoughts and feelings about spouses, children, jobs, and their own self-images trickle or spill out. The movie is an Indian-summer harvest of offhand, unexpected insights and overviews. Michelle Sweeney is the bus driver; the seniors are Alice Diabo, Constance Garneau, Winifred Holden, Cissy Meddings, Mary Meigs, Catherine Roche, and Beth Webber.—M.S. (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

Targets (1968)—Peter Bogdanovich wrote, directed, and appears in this lame melodrama about a clean-cut all-American (Tim O'Kelly) who turns sniper. The picture is rather naïvely made, and one begins to wait for the sniper to hit his targets, because there's nothing else of interest going on. Boris Karloff, in one of his last screen appearances, plays a veteran horror-film actor.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 22.)

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A WOMAN we know writes: When the taxi blew its rear left tire inside the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, I knew it was going to be a day out of the ordinary. The cab hobbled to a stop near some traffic cones on the Manhattan end. I paid the fare; then I opened my wallet again and gave the driver a big tip. "Let me make sure you get out of the car safely," he said, and he leaned way out his window, craned his neck, and yelled, "O.K., the coast is clear!"

In no time, I had crossed a couple of lanes of highway and found another cab. I told the new driver where I was going—an East Side medical office—and then sank back in the seat and pretended to look at the city as if it were my first trip here and everything seemed new and exciting. But even in the bright winter sunlight, which made every surface glitter and twinkle—the chrome, the asphalt fashioned from recycled glass—I just couldn't feel it that way. The best I could do was trick myself into feeling like an astral projection in a borrowed body. If I tried hard, I could make it a good body—something tall and Bacallish, with a shape and a swagger. By Sixty-eighth Street, I was ensconced inside the body of the forties cover girl Jinx Falkenburg.

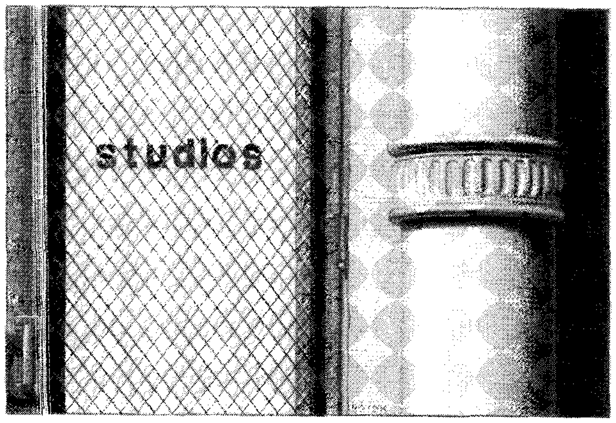
If you've heard of Jinx, I don't have to sell you on her beauty and charm or on how graceful her Botticelli-like physical proportions were in an era when popular standards of feminine beauty were often a matter of mere one-upmanship: one lipstick shade darker or one cup size larger. If you haven't heard of Jinx, you may want to know that she was born Eugenia Lincoln Falkenburg and was given her nickname in utero by her adoring mother, Mickey, and that she's in her seventies now and still lives in the city. From early childhood, Jinx was a swimming and tennis champ and was the possessor of one of the most photogenic faces and frames in the Western world. As a teen-ager, she was under contract to one or two movie studios in Hollywood, now and then getting parts in pictures like "Nothing Sacred." She also appeared in a Broadway show with Al Jolson. But these turned out to be dry runs. It was when fashion photographers discovered her that her career took off: then she would find herself on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* or on billboard posters for Miss Rheingold or sprawled across the pages of *Life*. I first heard of her as half of the Mr.-and-Mrs. radio show called "Tex and Jinx," which she did in the late forties and early fifties with her husband, Tex McCrary. Tex was a Yale-educated newspaperman who in pictures of the couple always seems to hang back with a bemused expression while Jinx flashes a thousand-watt smile for two.

I practiced that smile in the cab while Jinx kept me company. I persevered at it while I paid the driver, got out, and walked down the steps to the medical office. Jinx helped me turn the doorknob to the outer door, and press the buzzer, and open the inner door, and lift my right hand to remove my sunglasses. She waited with me while I gave my name and while the receptionist prepared a form for me to fill out. She was a pal; she even waited while I sat down.

But it was I alone who stared at the diagram of two perfectly symmetrical, champagne-glass-shaped, innocently uplifted breasts and considered where to indicate the spot that gave me concern. I decided against marking it, and instead wrote that my doctor had advised new pictures, because on the last ones she'd seen a speck, a grain, a shadow of a shadow of a shadow. The upside of all the new medical equipment is that one sees more in a doctor's office now than fortune-tellers used to claim to see in tea leaves. The downside is that much of what there is to see is nuanced and oblique—a shadow of a shadow of a shadow. That's why Jinx didn't stick around. Nuanced and oblique is not what she's about—a joyful, outgoing, golden girl like her.

It was a Monday morning, and the office was so full of women waiting for one kind of test or another that several patients had to stand until seats opened up on the banquette. Everyone fell into a book or a magazine. The office was quieter than the Reading Room of the Public Library; you became annoyed to hear a page turn. It was so quiet that it hurt to think.

To clear out the waiting room took two hours by my watch. During that period, I went page by page through the current issue of a high-fashion magazine and through an old issue of *People* that reported on Liz

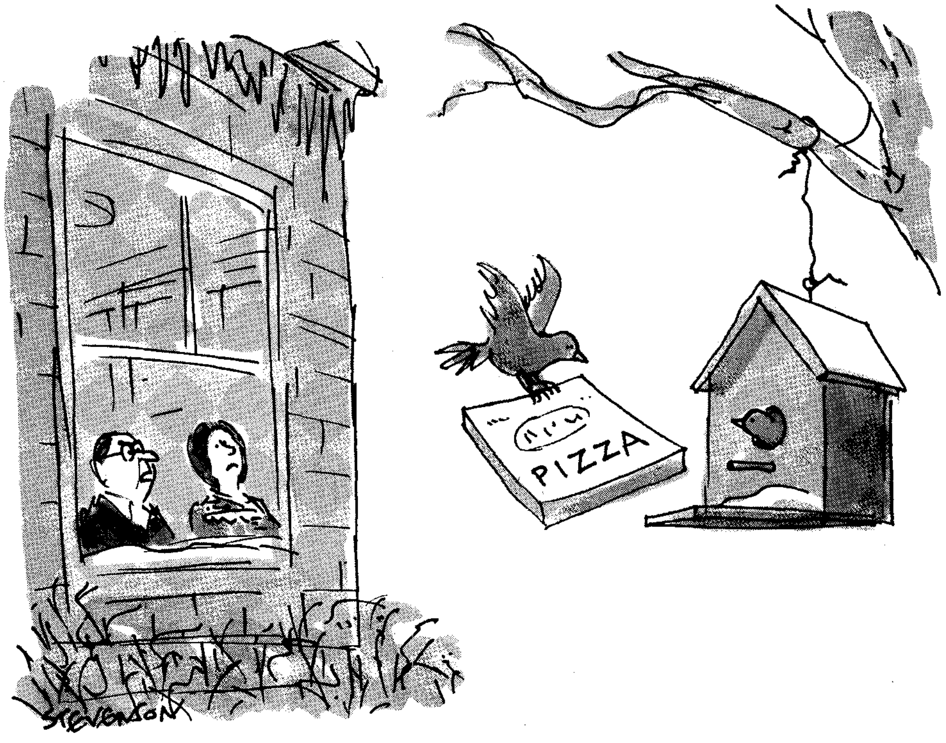


Taylor's marriage. The *People* pictures of Liz basically had lots of cleavage. The fashion mag had a forties theme, but early, wartime forties: lots of black-and-white photography with long, brooding shadows; lots of frank, Ingrid Bergman eyes and full lips; lots of skimpy suits showing miles of leg. Jinx really came into her own after the V-Days, when the New Look lowered the boom on scanty hemlines and New York seemed so securely the center of the universe that people spoke about "New York light."

Then the mammograms got taken. First a technician, standing inside a little room with a big X-ray machine, says, "Step in." Her voice is not unkind, but it's that of someone giving the same directions many times a day. Then she says, "Stand here and put your arm here." Then she says, "Lay your breast on the glass." Then she presses a foot pedal that lowers a second glass plate until it almost hurts you. Then she says, "Take a deep breath and don't let it out." Then she scoots through the door, and a moment later you hear a machine rev up into action. Then there's a long sound, a shriller one, followed by a gurgle reversing itself into loss of momentum and complete silence. The technician reënters the room and steps on the foot pedal, releasing the top plate. Then she takes a second picture of the breast, from a new angle. "Now the other one," she says. The whole procedure lasts about five minutes, clock time.

After the pictures, a nurse told me I should wait for the examining physician back in the cubicle where I'd left my clothes before the mammograms. "Don't put anything on top," she said. In a while, the doctor appeared. "Hello," he said. "It's good to see you again." After a brief exam, he said that he didn't see anything to be concerned about right away—the spots that had alarmed my regular doctor were unremarkable at that moment to his specialist's eye—but there was a new teardrop-shaped shadow that had engaged his interest, and he was going to study it under the microscope that evening. His report would go to my doctor within a few business days. "Don't worry," he said.

I write this as I wait for the report. Occasionally, I've flipped through "Jinx"—the memoirs of Jinx Falkenburg—and I've found something new and exciting each time, beginning with the foreword, by Bernard M. Baruch, which is printed in the form of a typed letter from Mr. Baruch to the author. "My dear Jinx," it starts, and it goes on, "As I read your book I found myself hurrying from one incident to another, always wondering what would be next. It is so alive with the enthusiasm that always bubbles from you, I felt we were in the same room." Then there's the story of how Jinx fell thirty-two feet from a roof to a concrete floor during her first big modelling assignment and lived to kick off a page-long paragraph with the sentence "May I tell about my operation?" And the photographs: Jinx with Cole Porter, with Eddie Cantor, with Albert Einstein. In one, with Ingrid Bergman, Jinx has pinned orchids in her upswept hair. Both women are laughing, as if at a shared joke. They wear evening gowns, with lots of chest showing. These are gowns that my mother would have longed to wear, and that my grandmother, a crackerjack seamstress, might have run up for her out of a retired bedspread. Both my mother and my grandmother knew exactly what it was to sit in doctors' offices for hours—harder hours than I've spent. I like to think that they also knew what it was to look at a picture of two merry goddesses, with not a shadow in sight, and to smile helplessly because somewhere, for a moment, the coast was so crystal clear.



"I'm not spending another cent on birdseed."

• •

Traffic Man

IN some parts of the country, we understand, "No Parking from Here to Corner" is about as sophisticated as parking regulation gets. In our neighborhood, a motorist spotting a vacancy at curbside may look up for guidance and encounter instructions like these:

No Standing
4 p.m.-7 p.m.
Mon thru Fri
No Standing
3 a.m.-5 a.m.
Except Sunday
Other Times
No Standing
Anytime
Taxi Stand

A stranger to this city might not immediately form a high opinion of the authors of such a sign, and perhaps there are even a few native New Yorkers who would feel that they were being toyed with. But the other day Michael Primeggia, the deputy commissioner in charge of the city's Traffic Bureau, gave us a sort of traffic engineer's tour of midtown Manhattan which confirmed our suspicion that the men and women charged by the city with controlling the movement and placement of vehicles have not been taking their duties lightly these last few years.

Mr. Primeggia is a large man, not easily contained by the city-issued Chevy

THEY'VE GOT IT PLAID...

AND THAT AIN'T GOOD.

• •

Corsica in which we made our inspections. We met him on the east side of Park Avenue between Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Streets—a block governed by the sign just quoted—and we began by asking if its meaning was intended to be apparent to the lay motorist. "If you follow some basic steps, yes," Mr. Primeggia replied. "The first thing to bear in mind is that we always put the most restrictive regulation on top, so you should read the sign from the top down. In this case, 'No Standing 4-7 P.M.' is the most restrictive. 'No Standing 3-5 A.M.,' which you see just below, has less impact, because the hours are shorter and they're nontypical. But if people don't want to bother reading the sign, or if they feel overwhelmed by it, what they should take in is 'No Standing.' We try to write the sign so that if there's any doubt you don't park."

He paused for a second, and then said, "In other cities, you usually have one need to address when you restrict parking at the curb. Maybe you want to clean the streets, or you don't want cars parked overnight. In New York City, there's a whole host of needs. At this curbside, for example, we're trying to do a number of different things at different times of day. Between 4 P.M. and 7 P.M., we provide an extra lane for uptown traffic flow; between 3 A.M. and 5 A.M., the need is for street-sweeping; the rest of the time, the block is used as a spillback for taxis waiting to pick up passengers at the Waldorf." Until a few weeks earlier, he told us, there had been a truck-loading zone behind the taxi stand, but that had proved to be one need too many. With trucks at the curb, taxis had taken to double-parking, and there had been times when their drivers, fearful of losing their places in line, had refused to let trucks in or out—a state of affairs that had led to arguments, and even some incidents of vehicular violence.

We headed east on Forty-eighth Street, and as we neared Lexington, Mr. Primeggia noted with a raised eyebrow that a sign was missing—a sign whose absence had the effect of expanding a loading zone in front of the Hotel Inter-Continental. "I'd like to think it's not the hotel's doing," Mr. Primeggia said, "but we put it up about three weeks ago, and it came down very quickly." Turning onto Lexington, he pointed out a "No Stopping" sign—"This is a sign that we use very infrequently," he said—and a sign instructing taxi-drivers to make pick-ups and drop-offs on the east side of the avenue. The taxi provision was an experiment, Mr. Primeggia informed us; before his office decided to make the regulation permanent, or to try it elsewhere, he wanted to see whether taxi-drivers would pay any attention.

We headed back west on Forty-seventh Street. Crossing Madison, Mr. Primeggia pointed out another novelty—a "Gridlock Busters" sign, suspended from the top of a lamppost. It featured a car with flaring teeth, a red line across it, and the warning "DON'T BLOCK THE BOX—FINE + 2 POINTS ON LICENSE." "This sign is not regulatory, it's advisory," Mr. Primeggia said. "We were a little unique here. We designed it when 'Ghostbusters' was a big hit." We swept through the Diamond District (no parking, some standing, plenty of loading) and onto Sixth Avenue. "See this sign?" Mr. Primeggia asked us, indicating a red-on-white "No Parking" next to a construction zone. "That's not one of ours. When a street is under construction, the contractor puts up his own signs and moves them as the work moves." We asked him if he could detect any difference in the contractor's sign. "It's a little less professional a job," he said, but quickly added, "It still has the force of law."

On Fifty-fifth Street between Sixth and Seventh, we paused to examine a sign in which Mr. Primeggia took evident pride:

No Standing
Except Trucks
Loading & Unloading
7 A.M.-7 P.M.
Except Sunday
—
6 Hour Parking 8 A.M.-7 P.M.
Sunday
NIGHT REGULATION
7 P.M.-1 A.M.
Including Sunday
25c per
15 Minutes
Quarters and/or
NYCTA Tokens Only
—

"This is our new program of night-time-and-Sunday metered parking for the theatre district," he said. "The night motif is our way of telling people there's something different about this regulation." The intent of the program is to raise money for the city, he explained, and early assessments have suggested that this objective is being met. "The meters are being used, and the operability rate is within limits," he said.

A call came through on Mr. Primeggia's car phone, and he stopped on Broadway to take it. After a few minutes in which he did more listening than talking, and looked concerned, he got off the phone and told us that a traffic-enforcement officer had been struck (but not seriously injured) by a vehicle that had refused to obey an order to turn right from Fiftieth Street onto Seventh Avenue. Mr. Primeggia went on to say—here his expression brightened—that another officer had broadcast a description of the vehicle, a city tow truck had succeeded in boxing it in until the police arrived, and the driver had been booked on a charge of attempted murder.

"It's not a typical situation," Mr. Primeggia said. "But our officers do get assaulted. Unfortunately, they are targets, because they have to tell people not to do things that they were intending to do." The motorist in this case was unsettled by a regulation making Fiftieth and Forty-ninth Streets between the hours of 8 A.M. and 6 P.M. "through corridors" for buses and taxis only. This sort of incident notwithstanding, the through-corridor concept had succeeded in speeding up crosstown buses on Fiftieth and Forty-ninth Streets, Mr. Primeggia said. He added that a few years ago a delegation of Japanese traffic officials had visited New York, and one of them had expressed astonishment at the sight of officers stationed at all the intersections on these two streets. He couldn't understand why a person was needed to enforce a regulation spelled out perfectly clearly on signs hanging overhead. Mr. Primeggia explained to him that it was a matter of "cultural differences."

Homage

A SLOW, steady gray rain falling on a New York street. The camera, hand-held, slowly pans from the south side of West Forty-third Street to the north side, and discovers that the same rain is falling on both. Hold. Cut to: the lobby of a building. In the dim light, the camera pans up to disclose that two of the overhead fluorescent lights have gone out; a third continues to flicker. Closeup in the gloomy light: the heavily lined face of a man in his early sixties. The narrator—it is the only time he will be heard—whispers that this is Frederick Wiseman, the nonpareil director of "Canal Zone," "Titicut Follies," "Near Death," "Welfare," "Central Park," and many other lengthy, accretive documentaries, which, taken together, seem to be adding up to the most intently realized study of contemporary American life we possess. A man enters the frame from the right; by the weary circles under his eyes he is identifiable as a reporter. In the dim light, Wiseman and the reporter have to look at each other for a while, to be sure that each is who the other thinks he is. In closeup, Wiseman is seen squinting through the dim light at the reporter; then the camera rotates, and the reporter is seen squinting at Wiseman.

"Uh, where would you . . . Uh, where would you like to have lunch?" the reporter asks, finally.

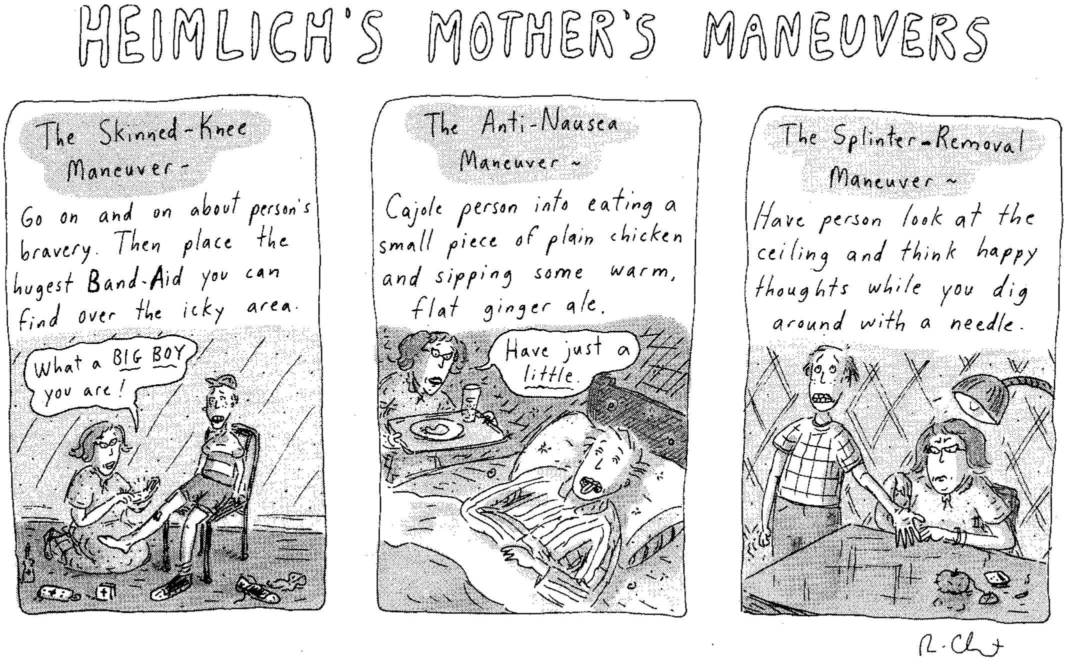
Wiseman, in medium closeup, thinking it over. There is a rumbling sound. The camera turns to disclose an elevator, its doors just opened. Three people get out. They trudge through the dim light of the lobby, muttering to each other. The elevator doors close again. A few minutes later, they open again. More people get off. They trudge through the lobby, too.

"Oh, anywhere," Wiseman says, at last.

The camera (a little shaky at this point) follows the two men as they walk west on Forty-third Street. It is still raining. A man in a gray raincoat struggles as he tries to open a gray umbrella. Some people in gray raincoats who are huddling under an awning watch him. The camera pauses to observe a woman who looks up anxiously at the sky and then steps back under the awning.

The reporter: "I'm sorry that my wife—"

A fire truck pulls out of the fire station on the north side of the street, and blasts its siren. The sound stops their conversation. They stand in silence and listen to the siren for three and a half minutes, as the fire truck waits in traffic near the light. Then the light changes. The fire engine pulls away, still blaring. The firemen look as though they hadn't shaved in days, and they are rubbing sleep from their eyes. As the fire truck pulls away up Sixth, the note of the siren changes, passing downward from something around a G-sharp to a note closer to E-flat.


HEIMLICH'S MOTHER'S MANEUVERS
The Skinned-Knee Maneuver -
Go on and on about person's bravery. Then place the hugest Band-Aid you can find over the icky area.
What a BIG BOY you are!
The Anti-Nausea Maneuver ~
Cajole person into eating a small piece of plain chicken and sipping some warm, flat ginger ale.
Have just a little.
The Splinter-Removal Maneuver ~
Have person look at the ceiling and think happy thoughts while you dig around with a needle.
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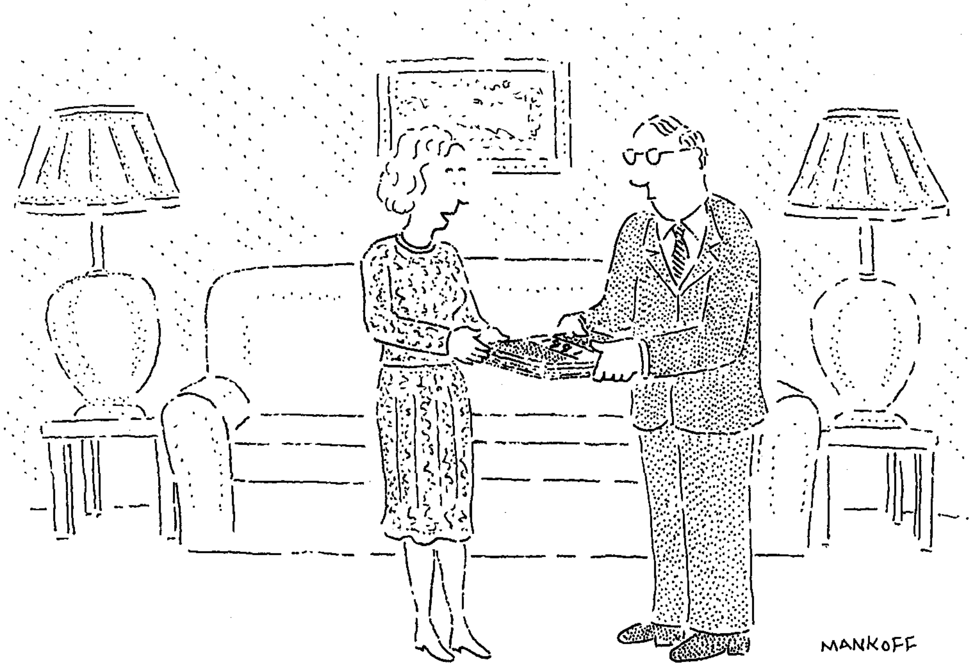

"Gee, Jeffrey, an annual report on our marriage is a novel anniversary gift, but I was hoping for something a little more romantic."

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The two men stand at the corner, looking up Sixth, until the truck disappears.

"I'm sorry that my wife isn't joining us," the reporter concludes.

They walk a block up Sixth, then cross the avenue, head west on Forty-fourth, and walk under a construction shunt. Little pieces of paint flake onto their heads from the shunt. Wiseman turns to the reporter. "Why?" he asks.

They walk together to the entrance to a restaurant. People sitting at the window tables watch them as they approach. There is no food on any of the tables yet; the people at the tables stare out the window at the rain. Wiseman and the reporter enter the restaurant together. Faint noises of a cash-register drawer opening and closing; the sound of water being poured over ice cubes into tumblers; a woman's distant laugh. A man in a dinner jacket comes up to them. Wiseman says that they will be two for lunch. The man in the dinner jacket says that he will go look for a table.

Time passes. The man in the dinner jacket does not return. Then the camera spots him over in the smoking section, half concealed by a cloud of smoke, where he has found a table.

"Oh. Because she's a filmmaker, and she admires your work," the reporter says, at last.

They sit down at their table; a busboy comes over and pours water for both of them. Closeup of the reporter, choking on his water. Some of it dribbles out of his mouth. The camera follows the drops to the floor.

A waiter comes over. "The soup of the day is leek, and we have gravlax," he says. "Today's pasta is linguine with little clams. There's a half roast chicken, and the veal is done with shiitake mushrooms." The waiter smiles, and asks if there is anything else they'd like to know. The reporter says that he is sorry, he didn't hear it all, because he was choking.

"The soup of the day is leek, and we have gravlax," the waiter repeats. "Today's pasta is linguine with little clams. There's a half roast chicken, and the veal is done with shiitake mushrooms."

"Thank you," the reporter says.

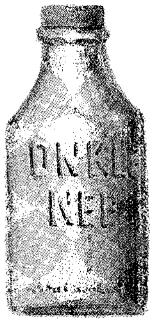
They order, and after a while the food arrives. The plates ring and clank as the waiter puts them down. The two men eat. Closeup of Wiseman's hands, with knife and fork, cutting his gravlax into small crosswise slices. The reporter's hands, cutting his.

The reporter asks if Wiseman could tell him something about the way he works.

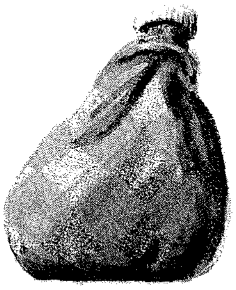
Wiseman explains that the first feature he directed was a documentary account of a hospital for the criminally insane, "Titicut Follies," made in 1967 and soon afterward interdicted by Elliot Richardson, then the attorney general of Massachusetts, who, ironically, had helped get permission for it to be made in the first place; that the first judge in the case actually ordered that the negative be destroyed, after calling the film "a nightmare of ghoulish obscenities"; that another court later ruled that the film could be shown to professionals who needed to see it; that the litigation went on for more than twenty years, testing the boundaries of First Amendment law along the way; and that the film has only recently been cleared for unrestricted public viewing. (It will open in New York in March.) Then Wiseman explains that his films "emerge in the cutting room"—that he starts with an idea for the beginning of each film, and an idea for the end, and then sees how much film he needs to use to connect the two. Sometimes as much as six hours, sometimes less. It usually takes him about nine months to figure out how much film he is going to need. He says that he chooses his subjects carefully, because he intends to construct as full a picture as he can of American life in the last quarter of the twentieth century; that he studied and taught law, was interested in writing and photography, but eventually gravitated toward films; that his films propose no solutions for the social ills they document; that he has made five movies in New York but wants his movies to be archetypal, not regional; that, although he had steady support from the Ford Foundation throughout the seventies and was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in the early eighties, he still has to struggle to find financing for each new film; that he considers the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's peer-review funding system hopelessly incestuous and inefficient; that to be a good filmmaker you have to be a little crazed and obsessive; and that he is a keen admirer of the poetry of Philip Larkin.

In closeup, the reporter's hand, scribbling down everything that Wiseman has said. Extreme closeup reveals that several important words—"archetypal," "incestuous," "Philip"—are seriously misspelled. The filmmaker's voice can be heard in the background. "Please. Stop me if I get too detailed," he says.

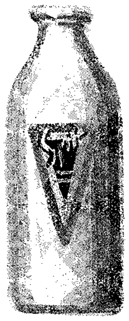
RATING THE HOT NEW H_2OS



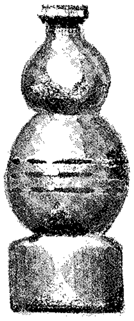
Onkle Nep—Contains naturally sterilized silt from the manganese-rich North Sea. No wonder the Dutch drink more H_2O per capita than any other peoples in the world! Winner of the 1906, 1907, and 1909 Gold Medals from the World Water Court at The Hague. ∗ ∗ ∗ ∗



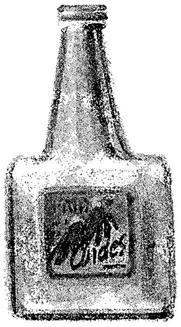
Klush—No deposit and no return, ever. It's the legendary "water in a bag" savored for aeons by the high-plains herdsmen of Kashmir for its non-fizzy, 101% non-alkaline aftertaste. ∗ ∗ ∗



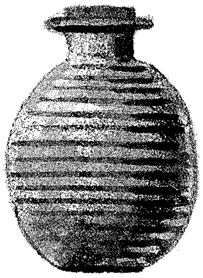
Spiff—Darn right this unfiltered rock water from the eastern slopes of the Albanian Alps costs more—it contains more air per cubic litre of volume than any other bottled water. ∗ ∗ ∗



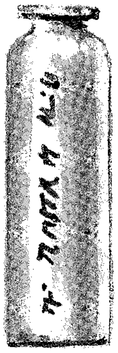
Arapaho—Never bitter, never boiled—this sacred natural elixir of the Nez Percé Indians is guaranteed flavor-free from first sip to last. ∗ ∗ ∗



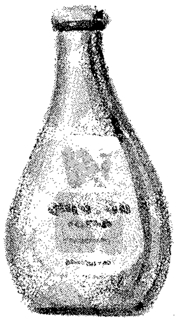
Pride of the Andes—Distilled in the dark only from water that has flowed only downhill—ridding itself hydromicrobiotically of all impurities, in a mysterious process science can't explain. Or won't. ∗ ∗



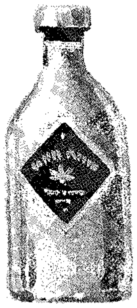
Pompeii Premium Lite—Lava-heated water from the long-buried ruins of an ancient Roman cistern. Comes in a handsome keepsake clay jug! ∗ ∗



Traffic Baby—New toast of the Ginza smart set and the first completely artificial bottled water, it's laboratory-clean and made from 1,001 rare chemicals that can't damage the vital organs—*or* the ozone layer. ∗ ∗



Wasserstoff—"Hey, taste this!" Legend tells us that the motto of the world's only pre-steamed bottled water was coined in a Dresden boilerworks explosion over a hundred years ago! ∗



Klinka Klota—Sounds like the cold clink of cubes in an old-time pitcher on the table on the porch in Grandma's day—but here's vintage fire-melted ice from Lapland's storied Frozen Swamps, way north of the North Pole. See those tiny telltale tungsten flecks? ∗

—Bruce McCall

THE HANDBOOK OF INTERRACIAL DATING

Bargetta was the only black friend I had in college. Blessed be the tie that binds. The Black Student Union, and even some whites, lamps without lights, denounced us as Uncle Toms, but we knew the truth: we were just messed up. "You can't borrow your oil from somebody else," Bargetta said. We were the Also Chosen and loved our people—the dead ones, the many thousands gone. We were rather hard, I must admit, on the living.

Bargetta and I didn't talk much about that; it was so much a part of the atmosphere of our friendship, of being stranded together, that we didn't have to. Besides, false guilt would have been too much of an obstruction. She lived for pleasure and to give pleasure to others. Life was one big Lenten sale: "Jesus paid for everything so that we shouldn't have to." Like me, Bargetta came to New York out of nowhere—Memphis, actually, where her father had run her grandfather's funeral home into the ground, but we used to say that she had been born in Poise, Tennessee. A financial-aid officer inquired about the Sony Trinitron she had somehow charged to the school. "How do you expect me to compete with whites?" Bargetta said. She had only to open a door to make her presence felt.

She was striking, tall as Muhammad Ali, with a head that seemed modelled after those on Ptolemaic coins. Each term, she would experiment with her thick black hair, as if to announce a new theme. One fall, it was shorn, setting off her perfect copper skull. That winter, it became a riot of coils. By spring, it had been conquered, braided on the right side into a stiff tail that hid one of her watchful eyes. Most often it was wrapped in one of the fantastic scarves that became her trademark.

Her family was religious in that sprawling, devout, Baptist manner. "I came to God before I came to Barnard." Bargetta laughed about the ashtray and cigar with which her father had started his Martin Luther King, Jr., museum, but a deep worry about what Jesus and her mother would say had kept her walking the narrow way—after a fashion. She represented to many boys a dangerous opportunity, as the Chinese say. Bargetta's popularity, her caressing trustfulness, brought her to the attention of the Soul Sisters of Barnard, a consciousness-raising group that smeared her name at the least provocation. What the Sisters could not abide was Bargetta's refusal to be answerable to them.

One spring, word went around that Bargetta was going out with the one Jewish guy at Columbia who was not pre-med. "He's in the Hasidic wing of Black September." He was big, blond, with, she confided, Sargasso eyes. "Thank God for those cossacks." From their lounge window, a cadre of Sisters spotted Bargetta alone and in a fit of offended sisterhood dropped egg bombs. She glided on and was immediately surrounded by gallants, who wiped the yolk from her turban.

That night, a little drunk, she interrupted the Sisters' session on Obote and Amin with her loud contralto:

There were three niggers of
  Chickeraboo—
Pacifico, Bang-bang, Popchop—who
Exclaimed, one terribly sultry day,
"Oh, let's be kings in a humble
  way."

We had to make a run for it, but Bargetta was pleased that she had controlled her vibrato. A high-school choir director once told her to cut it out. "'You're not in church,'" she said he'd said.

The black dean told Bargetta she could easily get into graduate school, but for a reason she probably wouldn't like.

"What's that?"

"Because you're black. Someone had to tell you, dear."

"I couldn't do your job. I couldn't go around in 1975 telling people what they've known for years. I'd freak out."

"You're from the South, right?"

"Born and raised like a chicken."

"I know your type. One of those girls with her little finger out. From what I've seen and heard, you don't identify much with other blacks."

"Are you going to tell me that my being a black woman can only be as valuable to me as my being one is to you?"

Bargetta wouldn't divulge what more she had said to send the dean hurrying from her own office. Bargetta gave the strong impression that she was someone who knew very well who she was but she wasn't going to tell you.

It did seem that Bargetta took "the black experience," as it applied to her, as just so much light opera, which struck me at the time, in those days when the Black Power critique was still ascendant, as unbelievably brave. She nourished her reputation as the queen of that joke about C.P.T.—Colored People's Time. If she said nine o'clock, she'd show at eleven dash twelve. She was known all over campus as an amazing student who was subject to complicated distractions en route to exams. Once, she explained her tardiness by saying that she was experimenting with brewing her own perfume. "I'm calling it Aujourd'hui. 'When you want the morning after to smell like the night before.'"

Bargetta was outrageous, but not unconventional. She was far from being a free spirit, ready to accept any price for giving up the world. She didn't think of herself as independent of her family until she figured out that she had replaced it with a more powerful institution: school. From the moment of her arrival on campus, she was already thinking beyond the cap and gown to another kind of protection.

She said she knew why she liked men, but she didn't know why she hated to go out with them. She was not, back then in the heady time of patriarchy bashing, what a coed would have called a feminist, but she instinctively resented men for what they could get just because they were men. I wanted to talk about her father, but she said her family life had been too normal. She said her irritation had more to do with what she had learned about the natural arrogance of boys, one of life's lessons that transcend color.

We usually met in the library, like spies, when Bargetta was in between boyfriends and in a philosophical mood. One evening in the main hall, after the ritual awkwardness of my having reached for Bargetta's hand, which she withdrew to tie and tie again her bandanna, I asked if she only went out with white boys. She thought a moment. She knew what had happened in the way back when, and what the Sisters had to say about militants who said that going out with white girls was a form of revenge, and the lanker their hair the better. She also didn't pretend that her taste had anything to do with progress. "Does that make me a bad person?" She said she wasn't sure what the reason was, or if she needed one, but, whatever the cause, she owed her choice to Jack and Jill. "To me, that was like my mother making me go to Hitler Youth."

Jack and Jill of America was a national organization that forced the right sort of black children together with other nice children of the "upper shadies." It had been founded "with tax forgiveness" in 1938. You didn't join, your mother did. A city chapter could limit the number of women who became members, so to your classmates who didn't rate in the opinion of mothers who believed in blackballings you either had a secret life or were a stuck-up in high-water pants. There was a rule that said that members abstain from whatever is unkind and mischievous, and could not knowingly undermine the policies of the organization.

Once your mother had signed up, you were drafted into the appropriate age group and you faced what seemed like a lifetime subscription to the club magazines, *Up the Hill* and *Scope*. There were nightmare weekends of recreation and concerts of spirituals. Your mother learned more about children through "careful study," contributed to research in rheumatic fever, and held polio drives.

It was a bargain—for your mother. She paid dues, and you were out of her hair, hauled off to transportation exhibits, to keelboats and copies of Ohio River side-wheelers. Enough lunch was funnelled into you to make you drowsy, and then you found yourself packed off to sketch prairie schooners, to wrestle with chiefs' trumpets, firemen's hats, and man-drawn engines. A designated mother had you by the elbow, and you were on the verge of tears in the Prehistoric Gallery with minerals, dinosaurs, and mounted birds. By the time you were handed back, like the laundry, to your own mother you were too worn out to argue about what was on television after bedtime. The rule further stated that if a child missed three consecutive group meetings or activities without the chairman's being notified the family was automatically dropped.

BEAUTIFUL MILES

Thunder outdoors.
He stacks shelves, though his children's dishes file in as if by themselves:
A pair of plates just there,
Six gaudy tumblers directly under,
So the baby daughter's safety cup is crowded.
There's something about it—
The household's loose order—that generally reassures,
And the storm's still far.

One's life, dear clutter
Assumed across the years. *Me* become *Mine*, *Us* become *Ours*.
Here is another, older
Girl's bowl that she made in school,
Third grade. Pastiche of colors, a serpent
Turns a circuit,
Begins as gold, goes black around the border.
Her father considers

Beautiful miles.
Their puzzling splendors; for instance how he and his two little brothers
Would kneel by that tall pile
Of swimming-hole rocks, in one of whose clefts
A snake always lisped, jetting its feces. They reeked.
A single peek,
And the younger boys thought, This is danger. But each a child,
Each smiled.

Stink and sweat.
Rough nap of his towel. Minor quake of lightning down in his bowels
As he probed the crack with a stick.
Half cruel, he smiled at the snake's recoil
Deep into the fissure, and at the look of the brothers—
Pleasure in terror:
They were grinning but chilled, despite the sun on their backs.
But what has all that

To do with a fool
In the dark, with his banal works? He knows. He goes on loading the racks
While freakish weather fills

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In Indianapolis, where I grew up, Jack and Jill was harmless, like hellish family vacations that are pleasant to recall, maybe even laudable, a word Old Guard black-sorority types liked to use when you opened the door for one of them or stood when they came, corsage first, into a room. The worst thing that ever happened to me at a club function was when my sisters tried to drown me as I bobbed for apples, and on my last field trip to Lockerbie Street, home of the Hoosier Poet, in downtown Indianapolis, a spooky caretaker said that when the beloved children's poet was locked in hotel rooms so he wouldn't drink before readings he bribed bellhops and received what he needed through keyholes with straws. But Bargetta wouldn't grant that Jack and Jill, in Memphis, was mainly about growing up Negro. "Who can live with the thought of having been a child?" she said.

Real toads in an imaginary garden, the members of Bargetta's teen chapter of Jack and Jill liked to sit around and say, "Your Mama." If she asked someone to pass the mustard, she got "Your Mama." No elaborate "soundings" or insult contests, just "Your Mama"—for years, so she said. Her mother didn't believe her and made her go to the mixers, the dances. It was hard to fit clothes on a miserable girl, Bargetta said, and, because of her height, she was snubbed by the boys, even the ones who could convert from Celsius, and,

The winter sky. A fool could say why—
Here in predawn January, sleepless—
He fools with these dishes.
The china serpent lips its golden tail.
The bowl is so frail.

He loves his life.
He loves the beautiful miles, for all the crudeness of their details:
This saucer, this blunt-tipped knife,
These cratered spoons and sheltering rooms,
And above all, above him, the quick and dead who've loved him
And continue to move him:
Parent. Son. Daughter. Sibling. Wife.
There will come strife,

One must assume.
Clumsy, the painted snake's eye; and yet less clumsy, he thinks, than I,
Mine. The lightning again.
Oil roars in the furnace. Too many near-misses,
And worse. In those miles one has to envision great damage,
For example the hemorrhage
That assaulted one of the brothers, reduced him to stone.
One assumes pain.

Yet the lovely distance:
He'd travel every inch again, in company with them . . .
Back to his silly business.
Back in thunder to the familiar.
Back to his station, to resisting a sort of invasion
Of nameless legions,
Though in fact there can never quite be sufficient resistance,
Assuming a conscience.

Soldiers in bunkers
Pass orders in fearful hisses. Another chain bolt sizzles and flashes.
There are planes on ships on the waters.
What is his right to guilt or fright?
None, unless it be imagination's,
Assumed in migration
Over its miles, storm grown ever louder,
Ever closer.

—Sydney Lea

• •

because of her unreliable wave of ideas, cut by the girls with heated patios and pretty hair.

I understood too well the reticence that overcame her among her black peers, which had an element of shame, the source of most rebellion. But not fitting in was also flattering. You were different, not like the others, not one of them. The fix was in, and the world arranged things so that you could act black with whites your own age, which had something to do with what it was like to show off as a child in front of strangers, but with blacks you shut down—became, as it were, as uptight as a slumming white, which had something to do with the spanking you were going to get for having shown off.

Fashions for Freedom was the main Jack and Jill event on the Memphis calendar. Some of the mothers had banded together to launch Jack Be Quick, a training program "intended to alleviate the dilemma of young black males in a matriarchal society," as Bargetta remembered the language of its publicity brochure. The year Fashions for Freedom planned to donate its proceeds to the "underachieving Negro male," Bargetta was in the banquet room, in a Peter Pan collar from Peck and Peck, resigned, not asked to dance by the street-quick scholarship winners, and feeling, as a girl, unimportant to the race.

"I didn't want to go," Bargetta said. "Our Cadillac was so dirty. I felt so sorry for everybody. I mean, here we were sitting with these stringbeans amandine and mess bourguignon shucking about what we were doing for the ghetto, and the hotel wasn't even in a black neighborhood. Chuckie Beauchamp's mother made him sit with me. I had to give him my Supreme of Fresh Fruit Fantasie. He clapped for the strapless stuff, and the moderator thought it was such a big professional deal, kept saying that the models were professionals, like it was a big serious professional deal just because some of them were white." As she told me this, Bargetta glanced around the reading room, missing the spidery smile of the senior monitor, who was admiring her from his post at the nearby information desk.

"Anyway, I was peeling a Hershey's Kiss when this guy with a big Dick Tracy face came down the runway. The escort was supposed to grin when his partner styled. He wasn't real fine or anything, he just looked like he didn't dig her personally and would punch out the first biddy who asked him to be more, you know, interracial," Bargetta said when we were outside. She changed her mind about the stack of books she'd checked out, and shovelled them into a campus mailbox. "But he looked at me, I swear. I switched tables three times. I wish I had gone backstage. It was wild. A look that could break night. I gagged. No one had ever looked at me like that, you know what I mean?"

AN elderly cousin, Aunt Bollie Lucia, my family called her, took out of storage and wielded, at the close of her long incarceration in an old maid's body, the doubtful memory of the Scottsboro trial, in 1933, when she nearly fell from grace and ran away with a white man from up North.

She: "You're a Communist, aren't you?"

He: "Yes, I am. Are you?"

She: "Why, no. I've never even been out of Georgia."

SOMEWHERE along the line it turned into a status symbol: going out with a white became like having a foreign car. "This girl's mother used to carry a fat wedding album to every open house," Bargetta said. "She almost sat on my head to catch my expression when she showed me a photograph of the groom. She was so proud her daughter had married a white dude."

In time, Bargetta's mother bore her daughter's romantic misadventures, of which Bargetta spared her not enough of the throbbing details, as part of the higher life into which education had launched her. Bargetta, the misbeliever, discovered that she intimidated her family, those followers of the double-duty dollar. She did a wicked imitation of the Kelly Girl and enjoyed arriving more or less on time for job interviews and being told that she hadn't sounded black on the telephone.

But after the Ashkenazi heartthrob, the Finnish news stringer with the telephone in the refrigerator, and the Irish video-maker with the greasy railroad flat, Bargetta moved her duffel-bag of scarves to Paris, to Pierre-Yves, a lethargic artist with whom she had collided during her junior year abroad. She managed to acquire a vague position with a New York record company's office in Neuilly—"I'm part of the overhead"—and because its phone bill was not, as they say, itemized, I heard from her often.

MY flight to Paris in 1980 was a flight to Bargetta. I sneaked out of Leiden without leaving a note. I had gone to Holland to find peace in the way I imagined burned-out souls lugged their mad hopes to ashrams. As it turned out, the old university town was anything but soothing. My high-school pen pal, with whom I was staying, had taken to Rudolf Steiner, and his five cats loathed me with the vehemence of stepchildren. Everywhere some kind of construction or renovation was under way, and for weeks I had stumbled over the cobblestones in search of soundproof corners.

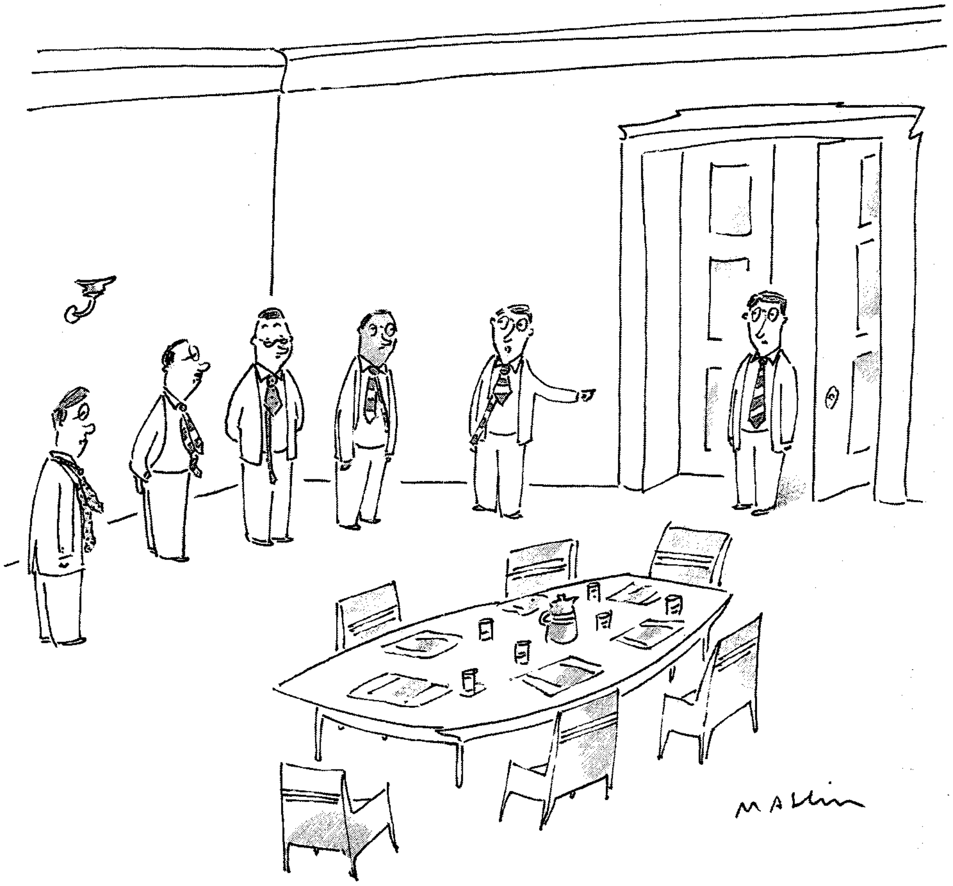
I made it to the far side of the outer canal, where I saw a New Zealand street performer I had met in a pub the night before. He, too, must have had a lot to drink, because he didn't remember me or the promises of transport he had flung like millet. His companions had no recollection of their rowdy offer of a ride to France, but gas was expensive and so they found room for one more in their battered Volvo, where I remained hidden until we were well out of Leiden.

Dikes and low pastures flashed in the sunlight; herons strafed the lakes. My parents had drilled into me that to hitch a ride with strangers was to tempt fate, and I worried that the New Zealanders weren't street performers at all. Their tales of how they had almost got busted at various frontiers hadn't helped. A quarter-moon monitored our passage across France, through valleys of bundled hay. I was thrilled that I had disproved my parents' theory of brigands on every highway when the New Zealanders dropped me off, in one piece, in a confusion of yellow lights.

Bargetta loved to be "contactable." Therefore, I had several telephone numbers for her in Paris. After I had played roulette with them at a café phone, the sound of her deep, smoky voice came to me like rescue. I had to walk outside to see where I was, Les Petits Nègres, because I just could not speak again to the bad teeth and lop-sided toupee that belonged to the man behind the bar. Bargetta told me to chill out and she'd be right over. I settled at a table outside and prepared for a long wait, but she wasn't on C.P.T.

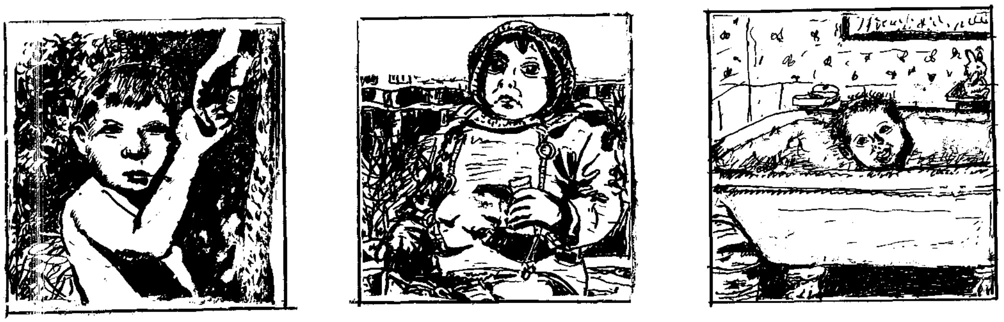
Through my glass I saw Bargetta stride toward me. I could not look at her without thinking of a poster by Zig or of a leopard cruising in a diamond collar. We stood cheek to cheek in the silver honky-tonk light for several minutes before speaking. Bargetta was, as she liked to say, dressed to the nines: black top, black miniskirt, which caught the beams of passing headlights, black fish-net stockings, black flat shoes, a black rayon scarf, which wound its way around her head and rediscovered itself at her waist, and the black leather jacket she wore when she stood in need of luck.

"You look serious, preacher man, but kill the shoes," Bargetta said. Then: "He's at another party, in another part of the country." I hadn't asked about Pierre-Yves, but Love me, love my three-legged dog was apparently her attitude. Her mascara was thicker than it had been Stateside. She said that what I smelled was the eucalyptus she put on her temples to cure headaches. Across the street, in front of the dim Hôtel d'Angleterre, perched on little scooters, pink-haired boys and girls with severe buzz cuts passed a bottle and "chased the dragon"—snorted lines



"Gentlemen, I've asked Mr. Gilbert, a four-in-hand expert, to join us."

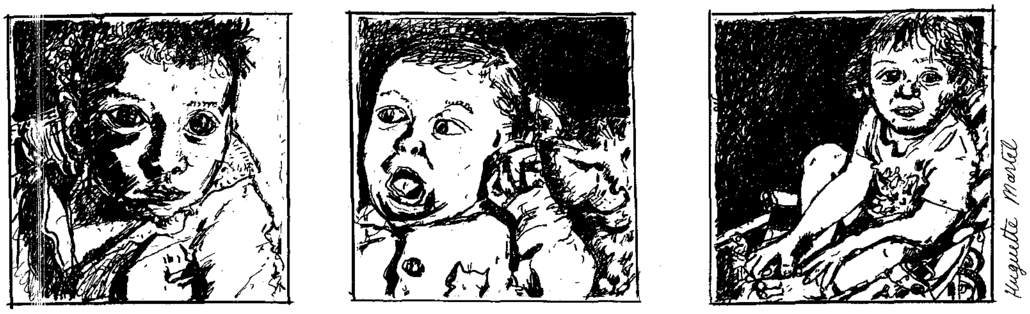
Babies Who Became Famous, and Why



Napoleon
Mother's pet

Lady Godiva
Overdressed

Jacques Cousteau
Liked his bath



Hamlet
Colicky

Alfred Hitchcock
Easily spooked

Jackson Pollock
Messy

• •

of brown heroin. “My mother told me to be careful because she heard there were a lot of drugs and blacks in Paris,” Bargetta said.

All that night I followed Bargetta through the dizzy streets. Though the weight of the bag on my back should have made me cry, I had long ago learned to go along with Bargetta’s program without question. Her talent for sussing out the hideaway where, for instance, Keith Richards might be sucking on a Guinness made her a coveted companion. We rolled from café to café, moved whenever a song on the jukebox did not meet with Bargetta’s approval. “I’d rather shoot myself than sit through that shit.”

In between stops, on the streets, Bargetta was pensive and remembered her duties as guide with one-liners such as “Quasimodo hung out here.” If I hadn’t known that she slept all day, I would have thought her stamina miraculous. In Bargetta’s code it was O.K. to throw up in a club—so long as she wasn’t doing it—but it was definitely uncool to be seen taking a sudden dip with the sandman. She once said her greatest fear of Manhattan was that she might fall asleep in a club and wake up in another girl’s clothes.

For the first time since I’d known her, Bargetta seemed to be stalling, to be waiting for an idea. Though I’d dropped in on her without warning, I never thought of Bargetta as someone you could take by surprise. She had always seemed so effortlessly inventive, two steps ahead of the dawn. She hoisted herself up and directed us toward the Champs-Elysées. I thought we were going to a party until Bargetta put a finger to her lips. I crept behind her up several flights of polished stairs. She smuggled me into an apartment, around the proper mixture of squeaks and moans, and into a pantry where there was a mat among mops and boxes.

“Happy birthday,” Bargetta said.

“You remembered.”

It was pitch dark in the pantry when Bargetta shook me awake. She led me by the hand, Harriet Tubman taking a runaway to free territory. I heard snores and the mutter of someone in the throes of a terrible dream. A pale blue rose behind the blur of trees. We walked in a trance up the yellow-and-cream streets. At a café near the river a youth whose shirtsleeves smelled of smoke brought warm, red beers.

Bargetta said we had been in the apartment of a Brit from the record company, who was letting her stay for a while, but the Brit was on simmer, rising to a boil about the number of people crashing on her floors and the rings left in her swank bath. One more guest, Bargetta feared, would send the poor thing over the top. Bargetta made apologies for getting me up, but she wanted to escape before the woman started on her body count. We watched the barges on the Seine. “A girl can end with nothing if she knows how to work it right,” Bargetta said.

“IF you come from a close family, you can feel lost without them,” Bargetta said. “But what’s my excuse?” We were on our way back to the apartment, to pretend I had just dropped by, and then to test the possibilities of taking a nap. Bargetta talked more to the pediments above the pavement than she did to me. “I used to feel sorry for him,” she was saying, “but he’s just another rich kid in disguise. I think he should paint on velvet, get in touch with his real level.”

Pierre-Yves had inherited his mother’s devious looks and one of his father’s apartments, Bargetta said. His parents were *pieds-noirs*, French who had made good in Algeria, and had his father been alive Bargetta probably would not have moved in. What Bargetta liked about Pierre-Yves was that he had gone to a slick school like Saint-Martin-de-France and forever afterward was unable to get himself together. “The cold thing about it is that I spent all this time building him up, and the next thing I knew he believed me.”

Bargetta said that Pierre-Yves began to talk a worrying amount about his style, his career, and that when he got analytical about himself it meant trouble. "I should have known after our first night. I'd set him up. Made him feel he was one of nature's rapists. And me thinking the cracks in his ceiling were the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. I slept with his glasses before that. I stole them. I should have stopped there."

Pierre-Yves got out of taking Bargetta to the country this time by saying that he hadn't been able to work, implying that she was the cause. His holiday coincided with the disappearance of a girl who hung around the apartment too much for Bargetta's taste. "You know, one of those girls in ankle socks who's into Zen and sleep therapy and macro diets. I warned her not to work me, but she kept coming over with all that brown rice."

A sinner needs a witness or else something is missing. Pierre-Yves flaunted Bargetta in front of his mother. "It killed her to have me to dinner. She watched me the way crowds do when somebody's out on a ledge, just waiting for me to pick up the wrong fork." His mother decided to surprise him and have his apartment redone while he was away. Bargetta was in the shower when she brought over the crew. To finish off what could not be defended, she refrained from inviting Bargetta to stay with her.

Back in the Brit's apartment, Bargetta had emptied the contents of her bag on the pantry's mat—shades, tortoiseshell combs, Borghese lip gloss, Chloé, Motrin, Efferalgan, valerian root, Aspro effervescent, Xanax downs, Zomax downs, Halcion sleeping pills, Coedetheline Houde, dagger letter opener, joint, address book, and a quantity of black cotton headgear—when screams and household articles flew by the crack in the pantry door. All explanations end at some point. The Brit had snapped. Her Carr's biscuits and hearts of palm had vanished, as had the caviar and the tin of cassis stashed behind the floor wax. She found two couples on her futon, one of which she didn't even know. "The domino theory of eviction," Bargetta said on our way out, looking wistfully up through the bannister. "She had that ten-little-Indians look in her eyes."

Along Boulevard Saint-Michel, near Cluny, guys with guitars lined the curbs. I saw some flower children who rivalled the holdouts of Amsterdam, and Bargetta grabbed me. A fight had broken out in McDonald's—an old-fashioned rumble complete with everything not bolted to the floor going upside down. People ran out and ran back to watch. We heard metal twisting loose, and scattered as the huge window of the restaurant jumped down from its hinges to challenge the mob. It shattered into a thousand pieces, glimmered for an instant, like a summer swarm of mayflies, and then crashed to the pavement.

Bargetta took off when she heard the police. She was fast in her kid slippers—was, in fact, yards ahead of me. I stopped and watched her race on, her lucky black leather jacket aloft in her fist.

"Am I having a good time?"

"The baddest."

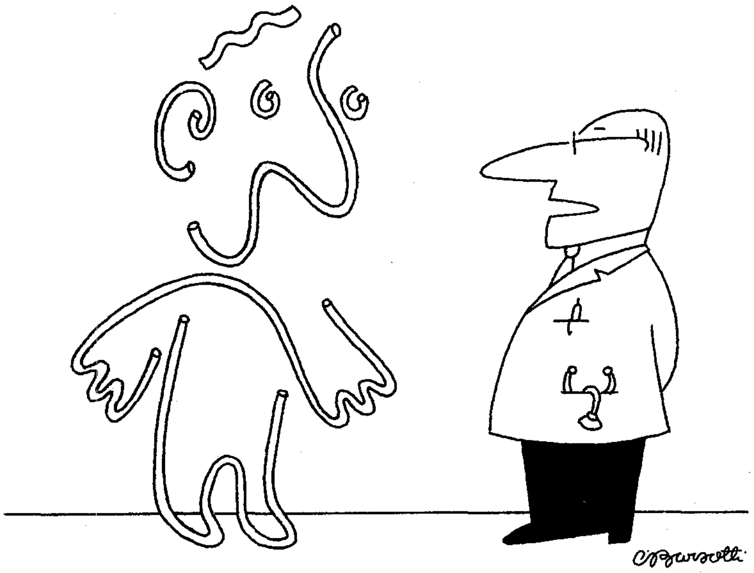
SHE said that the movements of street-sweepers in the Gare du Nord had the eloquence of people committed to survival, and that Barbes, the African-Arab quarter north of the peepshows, was the headquarters of those determined to hang in there. Migrant widows waited near the equator as the sources of their mail, black and brown men, distressed the streets around us. We entered a couscous den and extinguished its conversations. Goat and the music of Nass el-Ghiwan cooked behind a moldy partition. Molecules heated up, closed in, and Bargetta breathed through her mock-débutante smile.

"One thing about money, if you have it you can tell certain people where to go," she said. Pierre-Yves had taken Bargetta—at gunpoint, but he took her—to the Grand Vefour, one of the most elegant restaurants in town. She phoned ahead to make sure the kitchen knew a vegetarian was on his way. The waiter presented the most beautiful omelette the world had ever seen. "I do not eat eggs," Pierre-Yves said. She liked losers.

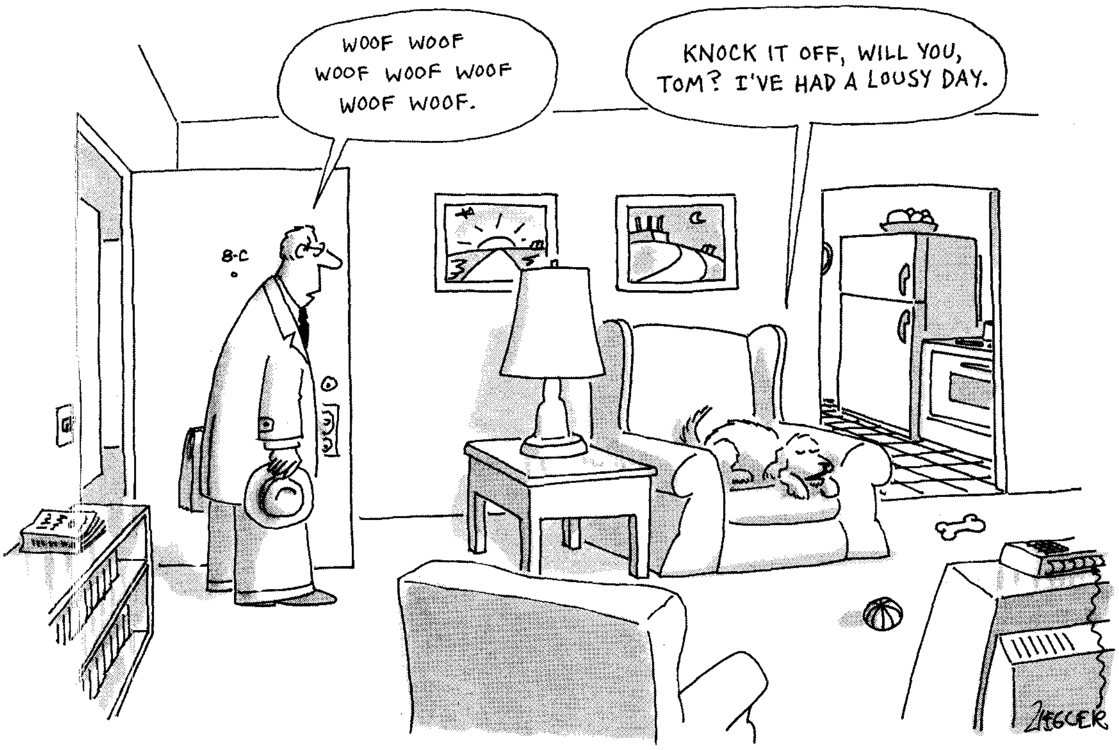
I was no help, dragging our bags around town, riding the bus with used or no tickets, feeling more freakish and fifth-wheelish than usual while Bargetta fended off Gypsy kids and made change for the phone booth. On the steps of Sacré-Coeur, she distributed cigarettes like the Red Cross. We missed the mass for St. Rose of Lima, who, though prudent, had failed to be martyred and was therefore only second-string. Bargetta had no need of intermediaries, being on the direct-dialling system with the Lord. "Now somebody up there slap me. Hard."

A hotel would have been our last resort. We ended up on the Rue des Trois-Frères, in the rump of an ash-colored dwelling with a rancid charcuterie downstairs. The torn and divided rooms, which reeked of kitty litter, belonged to Gilles, a boy Bargetta had known in Memphis, where his absenteeism got his mother kicked out of Jack and Jill. "Didn't I say friends are my aces high? You've got to count on them," she said as we made our way to his flat.

He had visited Bargetta in New York frequently before he lived there, selecting the longest butts from the hubcap she used as an ashtray, and it annoyed me that everyone said what a handsome couple they made. Not only was he the first black at Harvard to be asked to join the Fly Club, he was the first to turn them down. I offered myself



"Too much pasta. Go have some spare ribs."


WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF WOOF.
KNOCK IT OFF, WILL YOU, TOM? I'VE HAD A LOUSY DAY.
8-C
ZIEGLER

the dubious consolation that Gilles never wanted me around because I could read his mind. I divined that he liked to be the only "shine" in the room and resented the presence of other black men.

When I was in the fourth grade, a new boy in my class became the most popular. He had wavy hair—"good hair," it was called—and he wasn't dumb. He wore black bow ties, white shirts, and red mohair sweaters. The girls sang "Ooh-wa-ooh-wa-ooh-wa-diddy, tell us 'bout the boy from New York City," and oohed when he got up on Savings Bond Day to buy fifty stamps instead of the decent twelve. I bullied my mother until she let me dress like him. Then we moved, and I didn't need him anymore. There were real whites at my new school.

It was pretentious for someone whose real name was Luther to call himself Gilles, I told Bargetta. I didn't believe his stories about Fès and St. Bart's, about the grams he had consumed in a producer's town house, about how his mother, a sex therapist, had been overly married, four or five times. I didn't even believe he went to a shrink. I couldn't touch his will to cool. Bargetta said I had nothing to worry about, because Gilles only liked white boys.

We didn't shake hands. Mine was cramped from the straps of Bargetta's bags. I was being unfriendly, Bargetta's glare said. After all, he was giving shelter to strays. "You look as though the world is too much with you," Gilles said. He was supposed to have been away. Bargetta had called him on a hunch. He didn't say where he'd been or why he'd come back, but a bruise was waking up under his right eye. We'd interrupted him in the middle of a brick of Mujahideen hash. He was busy cutting out pictures of young workers with mustaches who were barricaded inside the Lenin shipyards.

"If Cheetah could talk, she'd tell my story," Bargetta said, brandishing a Marlboro. "I'm afraid of going cold turkey."

"I hear you, Sister Girlfriend," Gilles said. "My heart resembles an Etruscan vase. Broken and mended, broken and mended."

There were shutters that looked out on other Montmartre shutters and empty flowerpots, bedbugs, and fleas, but Gilles didn't care, he was just passing through. He made enough money as a model in Milan to do nothing for months. Passive, with airbrushed magazine-cover looks, Gilles was, I had to admit, completely without vanity. Though he could make the most of club hopping, getting by the door at the Safari, cadging Veuve Clicquot at the Privilège, avoiding one tab at the Drugstore and another at the Bains-Douches, he had the melancholy, which never goes away, of someone who has lost a parent at an early age.

"Cut the herbivore loose. Forget him," he said.

"I can't. Your phone?" Gilles shrugged. Bargetta dialled her mother's number in Memphis. "Maybe I should let her know my new number. No, I'll wait until I need serious money. Mad money." She dropped the receiver. "I'll skip town. I'll just book. I was once on Corfu in a heat wave. On cobblestones. It was like stepping into a pizza oven. I had to go every day to the fortress where the national guard took their swim break. I had errands. There was this policeman named Lazarus. He didn't shower after the beach. He was salty. He would come to the hotel on official business and interrogate mercilessly. I can't remember the Greek word for it. Am I horrible? Do I deserve to die? He removed the photograph of his wife from his wallet. That's where we should go. You would be worshipped as a god. They would carry you through the streets."

BARGETTA said that Pierre-Yves was a crucial investment. She was tired of being alone, tired of the loneliness that was like a mortgage she could not kill off. I couldn't think of a time when Bargetta had ever been by herself, but she insisted that Pierre-Yves was her last stop. "If things don't work out, I can always sell my lingerie and retire. I can take up where Miss Beane left off, right?"

Bargetta was comparing herself to the mascot of Manhattan, Dee Dee Beane. It was one of their big themes and I remembered lunches at which I had picked at my plate while Gilles and Bargetta went over and over poor Miss Beane's career.

"She had so much fun it killed her," Gilles said.

Bargetta said it was not a good sign that she had dreamed about her three nights running.

Dee Dee Beane was, for Bargetta,

BEDROOMS

Who are you, coming without flash and standing high
on a chair in the doorway?
—And who are *you*, living in this room
these twenty years,
testy and messy,
pitching bibelots
more from weariness than from anger—
but casting things aside for
charity, too?
Flannel shadows, caning, a clear
old mirror whose "flaws"
avert the eye
around to the present
shiftiness of surviving—
I see them where you live, do you?

Once I saw a horse
rearing so as to fit
in a tall glass cabinet
in a small bedroom south
of Aliceville, Alabama—
Gladys Hudson's ceramic palomino
among salvaged,
crocheted, framed
fandangles, shaken rugs,
hand-twisted chintz
chrysanthemums.
A horse. And I have
no picture . . .

In a book, in the dark, at the thinking end of one bedframe,
this passage, memorized:
A loon swims
leisurely in the heart of the stream—
seeming to certify
the solitude of the place.
Who is that flat person
slow-kicking with the loon
to rest—
while the green reserve of the unforgotten
is thicker and stiffer
than pages of memoir, more rigorous
than any camera wall?
Is it something to share,
the dream one hopes
will be so comfortingly
spectacular?

The light a photographer pinpoints
is for diary writing,
drawer handles, hide-soled slippers,
a single pair.
It says, *I can't*
go on being where you are.
But look close
at the dark
in this actual square
of your life.
I give you back your dream room.
You hallucinate beyond me here.

—SANDRA MCPHERSON

• •

the outer limits. They had pretended to great indifference to each other when they both did a short stint at the same black-women's fashion magazine in New York. Miss Beane, the art director, got the boot when she tried to put Andy Warhol in blackface on the magazine's cover.

Miss Beane intrigued Bargetta because she was beyond disillusionment. "There she was, thinking she could inhabit her skin like a litter, raised above the mob, and instead she rode herself out of town on a rail." Bargetta heard that Miss Beane had been in love, but the heir's family hired detectives, who broke up the wedding. His parents paid Miss Beane to take a hike. She came back when the money ran out, and they threatened her. Bargetta had every sympathy for the wound that never heals.

Miss Beane's history frightened Bargetta more than her temperament. Back when no one knew anything, Miss Beane let people think she was the first black ever to have gone to Radcliffe, class of '59. Miss Beane had a first-rate, logical mind, which she wasted in dissecting the faults of others. She could tear people apart. "You had to be a man to think she was amusing," Bargetta said. She had burned her way through many careers.

Scorn was Miss Beane's empire, but she ruled over a territory depopulated by drunken scenes. Bargetta said that Miss Beane took a neutron-bomb or Khmer Rouge attitude toward life in the city: empty it out, leave the buildings standing, and start over. She refused to acknowledge her own sister on the street. When she was mugged by two black men, she was elated, as if her part of a cruel bargain had been cancelled.

"We were on the same party circuit," Gilles said. "One night she noticed that I wasn't white. She called me a two-bit whore. I got up, crossed the room, slapped her, said, 'Sorry, sister,' and sat back down."

WELCOME
ERNST

Every party, Gilles said, ended with Miss Beane's passing out and falling off a chair. She liked to be in the swing of things so much that she became a vehement example of that celebrant of metropolitan life since Juvenal—the fag hag. She called herself "the spade of queens." Gilles said that her sackcloth was that she tried to seduce young men who had no interest in her. She drew the line at airline stewards, much like a drug addict who doesn't consider himself a junkie because he doesn't touch needles.

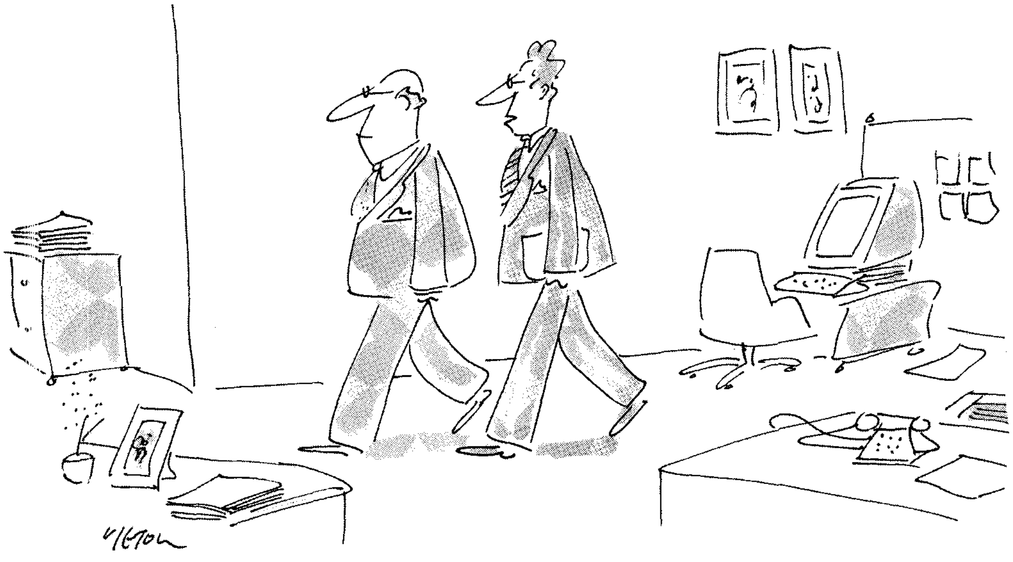
"She envied the boys' freedom. The farther you are from something," Bargetta said, "the more wonderful it seems. You're walking down a street in a foreign country and spot one light in a dark house and wish you could have that life. But if the window were yours you'd be plotting to break out of it."

Gilles said that booze had made Miss Beane's generation too Freudian. The more peculiar the behavior, the more fascinating it was to them, and rather than not know or be the last to know something, they jumped to malicious conclusions about everyone.

Bargetta said she hated people who called only when they knew something or wanted to know something.

"They forgot that sex is comic and love is tragic," Gilles said.

"Dee Dee Beane didn't," Bargetta said. She usually felt better after a deep-dish session about Miss Beane, but the therapy wasn't working anymore.



"I'm programmed to explode at fifty-seven."

• •

I WAS homesick for the anxious gullibility on the other end of the wire. Meanwhile, Bargetta slid into something like ego disintegration. "This life isn't mine. I'm only squatting in it." In front of a hotel she asked some black women from Abidjan who admired her diadem if they knew of any work cleaning up.

Every generation is an enemy of its father's and a friend of its grandfather's, and maybe that was why, when I pontificated to myself about Bargetta, her spirit of contradiction, so famous on campus, seemed, in the middle of unfazed Paris, suddenly old-fashioned, like nostalgia for Philistine terror about nigger-lovers and honky-lovers, for the days when the sight of her on Pierre-Yves's arm would have been a provocation. As a black who had grown up in a small, mean American city, and in a secure, protective, claustrophobic family as well, I had always looked to Bargetta for clues, for lessons about how to be a modern Negro in the great world. I began to wonder just where what I had always called her sophistication had taken her—whether she had anything to teach me about how to be free after all. I felt disloyal when I thought this way about her.

"He owes you," I said.

"Only what he gives," she said.

Elderly animals patrolled the lanes of Père-Lachaise, silent women washed the panes of Gothic-revival sepulchres. Initials sprayed inside hearts guided the way to Jim Morrison. A dozen figures with acoustic guitars or yellow ribbons for the hostages stared at unmarked squares of earth. Bottles poked through the hallowed ground. A girl began to sob, a man crouched. Incoherent poems in English adorned the surrounding stones.

Gilles went to pay his respects to "C.3.3." Bees chased me from one sector to another. I heard the rolling vowels of the Antilles. Festively clad black women walked the road; ahead of them, matrons added more blossoms to a mound of floral tributes. A large bust stood at the center. It was the grave of Allan Kardec, the mystic and healer who succored women from the beyond. Housewives wept like Ceres and entreated his thorax of marble. I found Bargetta, her head swathed in a blazing scarf. She towered above the profusion and raised a tentative hand.

"Masochists are the proudest people on earth," she once told me. I knew that meant she would never demand anything of Pierre-Yves, or of anyone else, for that matter. I knew also that she had no deep policy. She wasn't interested in making Pierre-Yves feel guilty, which is what people who find themselves at a disadvantage in a relationship tend to do to get some leverage. Never, with her, the beatific glow of the injured, just as she never referred to the helpful things she had done for others. Another kind of girl might have enjoyed behaving better than Pierre-Yves. It would have confirmed a sense of moral superiority. But she refused to make Pierre-Yves responsible for her feelings. That was her pride, her integrity.

Unfortunately, the masochist also risks making a gift of himself, and the beneficiary is obliged to lug this gift wherever he goes, much like the old woman in the story about the dead dog in the suitcase. Consequently, Bargetta knew what she did not want: for her beneficiary to regard her fine feelings as a burden. That was her sadness. She was left alone with her emotion.

Bargetta could have been the star at many tables; instead, she waited for Pierre-Yves's crumbs of affection. For some reason, this time, with him, she had lost that ability to go on to the next thing, to imagine replacing one situation with another. Perhaps it is true that you fall for someone from the inside, and that when you do, you see what your friends can't and let them think you've lost your mind. Like many superior girls, Bargetta had a talent for getting the man she asked for instead of the one she needed. "What others missed or messed up I found."

"GET off the stage," a roadie once said to Bargetta at an invitation-only sound check in a lower-Bowery rock club.

"She's with me," the star of the band said. He, her charismatic deliverer, looked down and smiled in a confident way that made a dozen girls in Bargetta's immediate vicinity want to throttle her. But Bargetta saw the pink slip in his eyes.

"The hell I am," she said. In those

days, when she knew her own worth, Bargetta had been elusive as an eel.

"I CAN'T let this man dance on my last nerve. You get the pitcher's mound down," Bargetta said, "and they go and juice up the ball. If they give you hesitation, then they're throwing heat." She never could drink. Her speech began to get puréed. "You don't see it, you hear it. You hit what you think you hear. You get your front foot out, get your weight balanced, follow through, and hope it's not a gooseball."

"Have you ever thought of going home?"

"Right? Niggers and flies, always hovering around some shit." Bargetta sprang up and barely looked back over her jacket. A fabulous murkiness obscured the tips of landmarks, and I half hoped she would keep walking. I let go and surfed until I saw Bargetta as I first knew her, when she looked up from a book as if she'd alighted from a calèche that had just flown over the steppes.

BARGETTA had never been driven into the ground before, but she lay around as if Gilles's place were a preparatory tomb. She was superstitious about going out, leaving the telephone unattended, though she traced her nausea to the slanting floors of the apartment. She chose carefully from her duffelbag of scents. "I made this one myself," she said. "It's called La Mort. 'When death need no longer be an excuse.'" She painted her mouth, allowed Gilles to move discussion to her hair, but wouldn't report to the record company or to any of the piss-chic parties Gilles always knew about and avoided mention of to me. I didn't know *verlan*, the "in" slang of the moment. I could only smile in French.

Gilles lectured on the military strategy of love, saying that the minute you told the Other how to treat you, the battle was lost. "But your manners won't matter if you're dull." He helped Bargetta to tape note cards on the wall beside the mountain of dirty sheets so that she could write down her dreams without spilling a drop. She was desperate for a sign.

Charlotte Forten came to Bargetta in her rocky sleep. Forten had left her prominent black family in Philadelphia to teach the freedmen in South Carolina after Appomattox. Dr. Rogers, a New England gentleman, read Emerson to her under the magnolias; Colonel Higginson took her riding in the lunar bloom. She was tempted to take their civility as something more than that, and could barely disguise the yearning in her diaries. But these soldiers for equality moved on. With her heart out of danger, she went back home, a woman who had come to her senses. Strangely enough, Bargetta believed in Forten as the patron saint of interracial dating.

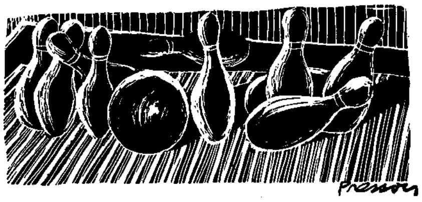
"I was walking around with my dry cleaning when the streets vanished and I fell into this big hole," Bargetta said. "I was buried up to my neck. The wind howled, all this old newspaper was hitting me in the face, but I couldn't move. I saw these headlights. They were coming right at me. Then Charlotte got out of a jeep. I heard her skirts in the dust."

Gilles played with the jewel in his left earlobe. "What was she wearing? How do you know it was her?"

"Because she said, 'You've had it rather easy, my dear, and that ain't good.' "

GILLES, a "sexual realist," chatted up the postman, and Bargetta abandoned herself to her impasse. "You could get the idea that I think not being unhappy is boring," she said. She muted the television, used it as a night lamp, draped scarves on light fixtures until they threatened to burn, aligned her shoes with the radiator, counted the packs of Marlboros she had tucked around the apartment. "My mother would pray up away out of this feeling. 'Guide my feet while I run this race.' "

Bargetta made unanswered calls she would not admit to. The thought of Pierre-Yves's fresh paint made her reach for Gilles's pipe. "The smart thing would be to keep my mouth shut and live with it. Maybe he didn't ask me to come to Paris, but he'll beg me to stay. I want to do my mother proud." She struggled with the latch of the gray bathroom. Gilles inched to the door and raised an eyebrow above one of his green contact lenses.



Sometimes I hardly recognized her and couldn't understand how the former Bargetta, with all her merry ferocity, had been swallowed up by the obsessive girl slamming things around in the bathroom. She said that when Pierre-Yves first left she kept his toothbrush in a glass, consciously in the spirit of the candle the sailor's wife places in the window. "I can't find the next righteous move." She explained things to the ruined parquet. She said no one was more ruthless than a guy trying to get out of a relationship. "Adulthood has no gender, but you get to it one way as a boy and another way as a girl."

I waited for the real Bargetta to emerge and make war on the world, but nothing could penetrate her indifference to the weather outside. She covered pages with her argument to herself, tore up what she had written, rewound the B-52s cassette with a pen, wrote again, shredded once more. She hugged her shoulders, a piston at the end of its cycle: intake, combustion, power, exhaust.

She said she used to keep a list of the return addresses on his mail. She said she could pick up one of his books, not that he was much of a reader, and just by sniffing the pages tell where he had given up. Was the problem, she asked, what she had given or what Pierre-Yves had taken away? "What can happen can be so bizarre. He maintained a berserk posture toward me for days. His expression didn't change. This wild, unenlightened look. I thought he was going to kick down the door. Instead, he opened it quietly and left."

NOT long after I had gone back to Holland, depressed because Bargetta would never be able to convert what Pierre-Yves had done into her choice, and because he perhaps was more exotic to her than she was to him, and in thinking of him as such she had made herself ordinary, I received an unsigned antique postcard. It showed one of those scenes of a bygone music-hall Paris. The original message of some stranger from long ago had been painted over. I recognized Bargetta's handwriting, lovely as an anchorite's:

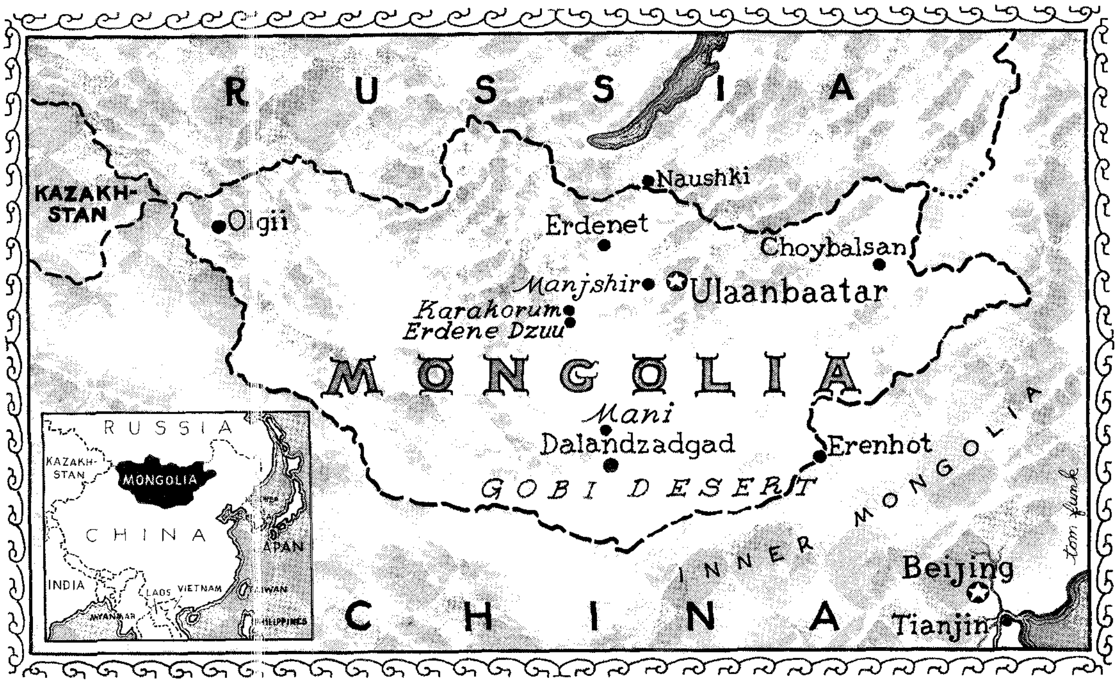
Rule No. 1: Don't think he's better than you are, and don't think he doesn't think that he is.

Rule No. 2: Eat first—then storm out.

—DARRYL PINCKNEY

A REPORTER AT LARGE

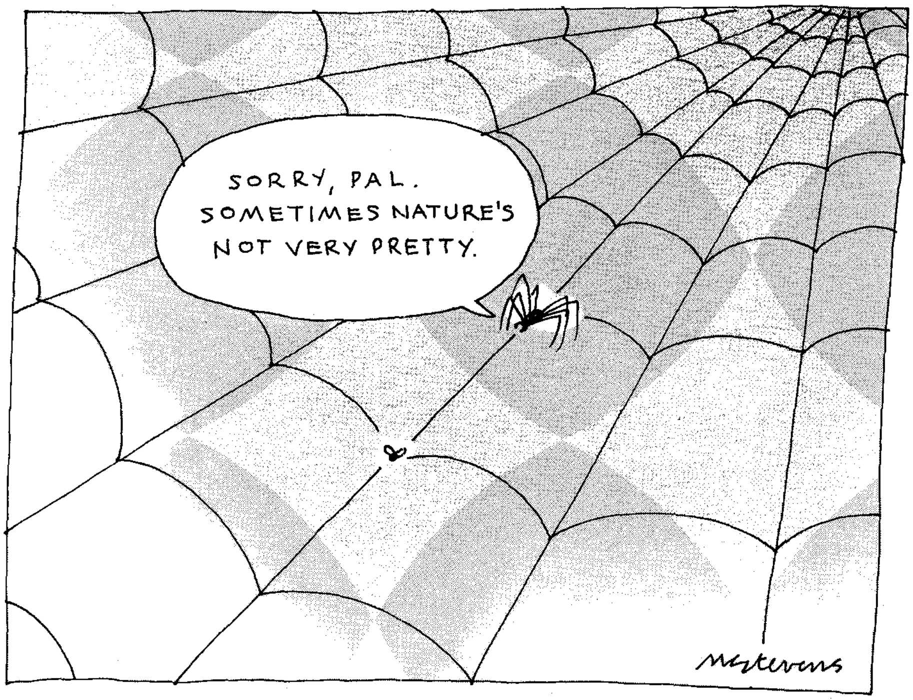
STARTING FROM SCRATCH



THE nearest thing to a precedent for what is taking place in this impoverished, sparsely populated nation landlocked between Russia and China may be the Oklahoma land rush of 1889, when a starter's gun sent fifty thousand would-be settlers racing to stake claims on some two million acres of former Indian territory. The analogy isn't precise—for one thing, it is state property rather than state land that is being claimed—but the principle of giving all citizens an equal start at grabbing assets is the same, and so are charges that some well-placed Mongols (Sooners, such people were called in Oklahoma) are evading safeguards and getting an illegal head start on capitalism.

In 1921, Mongolia embraced Communism, and within three years became the unofficial "sixteenth Soviet republic"; eight years ago, in a move almost unnoticed in the West, it became the first of the Eastern-bloc satellites to begin breaking away from Soviet control and from a Communist economy. "Now we have to have a birth of owners," Kinajatyn Zardykhan, the leader of a powerful reform faction in Mongolia's ruling party—the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, or M.P.R.P.—told me last September in Ulaanbaatar, the capital. Zardykhan became known three years ago as Mongolia's Yeltsin, after he proposed in a Party magazine that the nation renounce Marxism and initiate a market economy. He told me that he was looking forward to the emergence of "a national capitalist—a richest man in our country." Already allotted to every Mongolian man, woman, and child alive on May 20, 1991—the day this plan was enacted by the People's Great Hural, or upper house of the Mongolian Parliament—were three "small" vouchers and one "big" voucher. The small vouchers were being used to buy, at auction, many of the lesser assets of the state, including cars, small shops, and livestock; the big vouchers were to be exchanged for shares in approximately five hundred corporations being formed from large state enterprises, and these shares will be traded as soon as the first Mongolian stock exchange is established. The building that will house it—a pink, column-fronted children's cinema on Sukhbaatar Square, Ulaanbaatar's principal square—is being converted at an estimated cost of four million dollars. At least for the time being, the Mongolian government will keep in its own hands utilities, military property, telecommunications, public transport and aviation, health care, and schools up to the university level. While the formerly Communist nations of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia have all initiated privatization programs aimed at distributing state assets, their programs are expected to take years to complete; the Mongolian undertaking simply to give each of its two million one hundred thousand citizens the wherewithal to buy shares in companies that have yet to be created, let alone evaluated, is unique. One might even call it revolutionary, but that word, evoking as it does the Communist Revolution of seventy-five years ago, now has a conservative context in the formerly Communist world.

My conversation with Mongolia's Yeltsin took place in Government House, a massive stone structure on Sukhbaatar Square which resembles the Great Hall of the People, in Beijing. Zardykhan, who has surmounted the political handicap of belonging to a minority race (he is an ethnic Kazakh), told me, through an interpreter, that he had sufficient support either to reform the M.P.R.P.—which would be his choice—or to divide it, thus causing it to lose power for the first time since 1920, when it was formed as the Mongolian People's Party. "If the majority wants to continue the old style of Party activities, we will leave the Party," he said. "There is no third way out." The debate centered, symbolically, on whether or not the Party


SORRY, PAL. SOMETIMES NATURE'S NOT VERY PRETTY.
mstevens

should drop the word "Revolutionary" and return to its original name. (In November, a similar dispute preoccupied the People's Great Hural, and after two days of debate its members agreed to change their country's name from the Mongolian People's Republic to the Republic of Mongolia.) Although a Party plenum called in September to consider the question adjourned without reaching a decision, an indication of the future direction of the M.P.R.P. was given at a subsequent press conference, when a spokesman declared that it "has never been and is not a Communist Party." Among those startled by this announcement was James Kynge, of the Reuters news agency. "I remember sitting in this room last year and hearing a member of your Party say that it was a Communist Party," he said. "How is it possible to say that you are not Communist?"

"We are a left-wing party relying on socialist ideas" was the response. "If the ideology is not Communist, and the Party is not Communist, who could call himself Communist?"

Whether the Party is now or ever has been Communist, even its opponents expect it to retain parliamentary control in the next elections, tentatively scheduled for July, 1992. At the time of my conversation with Zardykhan, the M.P.R.P. listed ninety-nine thousand members. (As in the Communist Parties of China and the former Soviet Union, membership has been by invitation only, and those asked to join have usually advanced through Party youth groups and have passed ideological examinations.) However, Zardykhan predicted that as many as forty thousand would eventually join various opposition groups; in December, he began the exodus by breaking away with some three hundred followers to form a new political party called the Mongolian Party for National Renaissance.

The first public challenge to the M.P.R.P.'s one-party rule in Mongolia was sounded in 1989, at a rally held by the then illegal Mongolian Democratic Association—a group of several hundred students and intellectuals—in Ulaanbaatar on International Human Rights Day, the tenth of December. In some respects, the rally bore a similarity to the demonstrations by Chinese students seven months before, in Tiananmen Square, except that, as Mongolian friends of mine pointed out, "we marched in the winter." This and subsequent actions, which included hunger strikes, attained a happier result than did the demonstrations in Beijing. In March of 1990, moderates took control of the Party's Congress and the People's Great Hural, and replaced Mongolia's head of state, Jambyn Batmonh (a reformer, who was nevertheless viewed as a conservative), with Punsalmaagiin Ochirbat, the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Supply. Shortly afterward, the People's Great Hural abolished the constitutional clauses that had validated the M.P.R.P.'s leading role in Mongolian society.

Since then, however, the M.P.R.P. appears to have continued in power principally by guiding and dividing its opposition. ("The one thing we really need is a strong opposition party," an M.P.R.P. member of the Ochirbat government recently told a bemused State Department official in Washington.) There are, at latest count, eight minority parties, which coöperate not only with each other but with the M.P.R.P. In the country's first free elections, in July of 1990, the M.P.R.P. won three hundred and fifty-seven of the four hundred and thirty seats in the People's Great Hural, and so could have easily retained its monopoly on government posts. Instead, it invited two of the minority-party leaders into the sixteen-member Cabinet.

One of the new opposition Ministers is Davaadorjiin Ganbold, a thirty-four-year-old economist, who heads the Mongolian Party for National Progress. Ganbold, an economics graduate of Moscow State University, is known as "the architect of the reform," and is in charge of carrying out the privatization program. We spoke, mostly through an interpreter, in Ganbold's panelled third-floor office in Government House. "Of course it is difficult to be in the government and in the opposition at the same time," he said, in response to my opening question. "But it would also be difficult just to be in one or the other position."

I asked him whether he thought that the M.P.R.P. had invited him and other leaders of minority parties into the government in order to fragment the opposition.

"I cannot say that there wasn't such an idea," he said. "But I am not really a representative of opposing forces in the classic meaning. On the contrary, our Party supports the new government's policies because they are *our* policies."

Was the M.P.R.P. having it both ways, then? If privatization succeeded, it could claim the credit; if not, it could blame Ganbold, since privatization was his idea?

"Possibly," he replied. "However,

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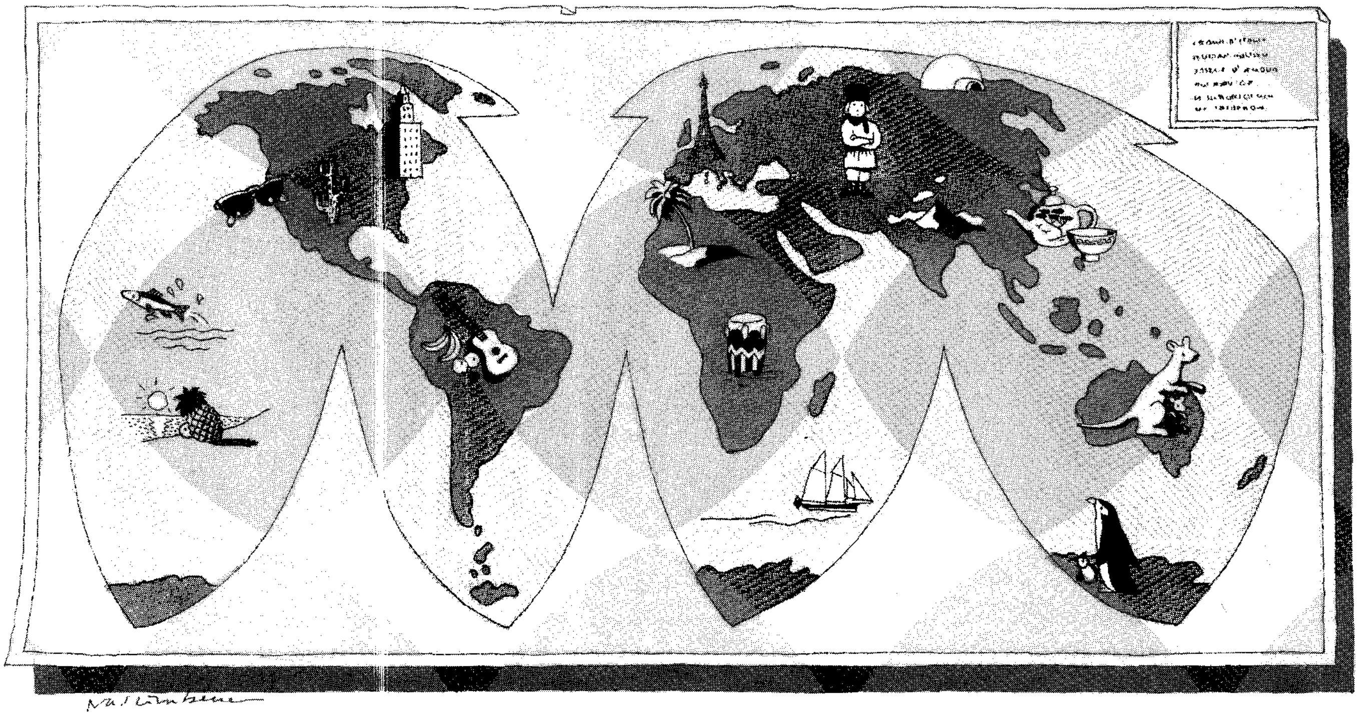

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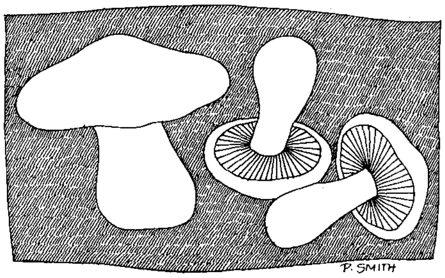
our ambition is not to occupy high posts but to improve our country's economic position—to take it out of its critical situation. If we wanted to uncover even more bad activities"—a dozen former M.P.R.P. leaders had been charged with corruption—"we could collapse the whole M.P.R.P., like the Soviet Union's Communist Party, but that would be bad for parliamentary democracy. We have to keep the government of Mongolia alive for the welfare of the country." (For their part, old-line members of the M.P.R.P. have charged the reformist leaders of the State Bank and the Mongolian Bank of Trade & Development with losing or misappropriating eighty-two and a half million dollars of the nation's scarce hard currency and gold reserves.)

The designer and chairman of Mongolia's first stock exchange is Naidansurengiin Zoljargal, a twenty-seven-year-old former State Bank statistician. While he waited for its building to be ready, he was working in a dressing room stage right of a second-floor theatre in a Ministry of Finance building, but he told me he didn't envy any other economist in the world. "Economists in your country, if they study and work hard, maybe someday will get to the top and administer your banking system," he said, in brisk, fluent English. "Me, I'm creating an economic system from nothing. I am actually *doing* economics." Zoljargal's current objective is to head off Mongolia's Sooners—those with advance information, obtained usually through government or M.P.R.P. connections, about which state assets are the most valuable and when they are to be auctioned. (One of the accusations I heard most frequently in Mongolia was that the first auctions using the small vouchers had been held on the day that those auctions were announced, and before Mongolians without connections learned of them.) In addition to drafting a law barring insider trading, Zoljargal was supervising the training of two hundred and forty brokers, who were to be licensed to carry out the share transactions. "Two hundred and eighty took the exam, and I didn't expect so many to pass," he said, "but now I see that these guys are really hungry for this kind of knowledge, and they are absorbing whatever we can give them."

What the Mongolian Stock Exchange couldn't give them yet, however, was much in the way of modern office technology; during the course of my interview with Zoljargal, a technician arrived to install his telephone. Outside his office, in the theatre, a dozen or so trainees were lined up to practice on three computer terminals, only one of which was equipped with a printer. "When people come here to give me advice, I tell them just to give me computers instead," the chairman said. "But we're still going ahead, whether we get them or not. If you want to swim, you have to jump into the water."

It is likely that quite a few of the new businesses will go broke: Zoljargal foresees bankruptcy for as many as a third of them. However, that leaves more than three hundred corporations with profit potential. Obviously, the shares of those companies will command higher prices on the stock exchange than will the shares of the marginal ones. The big vouchers have a nominal value of seven thousand tugriks (a hundred and seventy-five dollars, at the official exchange rate), although I was quoted five thousand tugriks for one being illegally peddled at Ulaanbaatar's *baraany zah*, a three-day-a-week open-air bazaar. (The Mongolian tugrik—the word means "disk," but the currency is paper, printed in Russia—was devalued last June from seven to the dollar to forty to the dollar, but while I was in Ulaanbaatar the money changers on the street were offering a hundred tugriks for a dollar, and hard bargainers could get a hundred and ten.) The seven-thousand-tugrik figure was determined by making a rough appraisal of the assets to be sold and dividing the total by the total population. But how, I asked, would the number of shares that each voucher could buy in any corporation be determined?

"That's where we have the advantage over other Eastern-bloc systems," the chairman replied. "We're not going to be evaluating them at all. Let the market decide. The idea is to get the information on these companies out to everybody, so that everybody will have the same opportunity to bid. And the bids will determine a stock's price."



But what about those who end up with shares in companies that go bankrupt?

"What will they really have lost?" Zoljargal asked. "They will have got the shares for nothing. One thing you have to understand is that I can't make two million people happy tomorrow. We're going to have to go through a lot of difficulty, and we have to accept the fact that some people will be unhappy. But if we don't stop inflation some may starve. There has to be a stop-loss point."

Wouldn't the vouchers themselves fuel inflation?

"Absolutely not. We've designed them specifically not to add anything to the inflationary pressure. Once the voucher is traded, it disappears. From then on, the stock trades only for cash, so we will have created a private economy without adding any money. Investors and economists don't like things to move as fast as this. Some of the guys that do the most talking about free markets really want to centrally plan a free market. Instead, we will have a *free* free market. I briefed your State Department on this program a year ago, and the people there just shook their heads. They say that the idea is great and exciting but that there's no guarantee it will be successful. They don't like the fact that the stakes are so high. To them, it is too great a step—too risky."

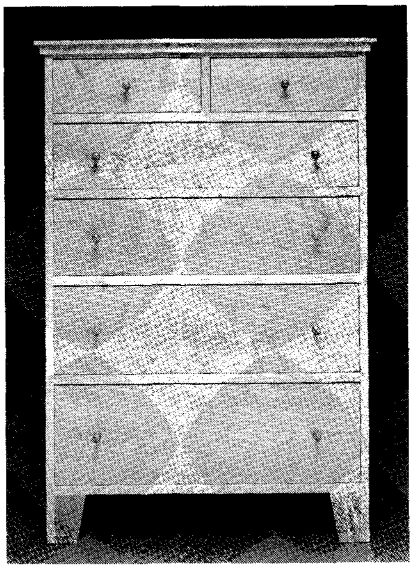
Last fall, the government invited thirty participants from eleven countries and Amnesty International to a conference at Government House on the drafting of a new State Yassa, or constitution. ("Mongolians seem remarkably free of false pride," Ian Gorvin, the Amnesty representative, observed during a break in the proceedings. "Did you ever hear of a country asking foreigners to help draw up its constitution?") The conference, assembled around a huge horseshoe-shaped table in a room equipped with simultaneous-translation facilities, lasted four days. Its working document was an English translation of an eighty-one-article draft, whose preamble had a familiar ring: "We, the people of Mongolia: cherishing human rights, freedoms, justice, and the national unity;

inheriting the national statehood, the traditions of its history and culture; strengthening the independence and the sovereignty of the nation; respecting the civilization of mankind; and desiring to develop a humane and democratic society in the land of Mongolia hereby proclaim the State Yassa as the Constitution of the State." One of the draft's articles charged Mongolians to "respect just and humane order, and strictly fulfill" such "fundamental duties" as working for the development of the nation, defending the Motherland, guarding state secrets, paying taxes (which are not now levied on personal incomes), protecting the environment, leaving natural resources to future generations "as a sacred duty," and respecting the "sovereignty, reputation, and customs of other nations and peoples." In the government to be created by this new constitution, power would be divided among the offices of President and Prime Minister and a unicameral parliament to be known as the State Great Hural. The parliament would be reduced in size (present plans call for a membership of fifty-six) and half its members would be elected every three years; more important, it would have the power to choose the President, but it would be restricted in its choice to the two candidates who received the highest number of votes in a Presidential primary to be held every six years. The Prime Minister, who would conduct administrative affairs and report to the President, would be named by the party with the largest number of seats. An independent judiciary would also be established, under a Supreme Court appointed by the President with the consent of the State Great Hural. For the first time in their history, Mongolians will likely be allowed to own land—but not pastureland, which is traditionally shared by all Mongols—and would be guaranteed the enjoyment of equal rights without distinction as to "ethnic origin, language, race, age, sex, social and property status, occupation, religion, conviction, education, and other status." Torture and "arbitrary deprivation of human life" would be expressly prohibited, as would political activities by the country's Buddhist monasteries—a touchy point in Mongolia, which for several years early in this century was virtually a theocratic state.

One of the Americans invited to the constitutional conference was John L. Kane, Jr., a senior federal judge in Colorado, and at the end of its first session I asked his jurisprudential opinion of the draft Yassa. "It has some pretty good ideas, but some of its clauses seem far out," he said. "It is logically inconsistent and has gaps, but it also has some ideas that constitutional scholars talk about putting into our own Constitution—that clause about 'fundamental duties,' for example." After the conference ended, I spoke again with Judge Kane, who recalled a discussion with one of the Mongolian officials about the concept of checks and balances: "The fellow asked me, 'Well, if you have all these limitations in your Constitution, who has the power?' I said, 'You know the guy out there in the desert with the camels? He's the one with the power. He doesn't need you, you need him.' 'We never thought of it in those terms,' the Mongolian said."

MONGOLIANS call the portable tents of herdsmen *ghers* (*yurt* is the Russian word for them), and it is as true now as it was seven hundred years ago, when Marco Polo traversed this countryside, that travellers appearing at any time at any *gher* will be taken in, refreshed with food and drink, told they may stay as long as they wish, and furnished with whatever they may need for the continuation of their journey. "Any Mongol who refuses admittance, or gives a cold welcome even, is at once stigmatized as not a man but a dog," wrote James Gilmour, a British evangelist who travelled throughout Mongolia a century ago. "Any host who would not offer tea without money . . . would soon own the same reputation." But the welcome goes beyond nomadic social custom: the Mongols whose residences I and sometimes as many as four companions descended on without notice last September seemed genuinely glad to welcome us, and if two or more *ghers* stood together the occupants of the ones we did not enter were, to all appearances, disappointed.

This welcome holds strong even though foreign visitors are no longer much of a novelty to Mongolian nomads. "We've seen lots of you," one shepherd told me, "but maybe if you go farther into the countryside you'll find people who haven't seen any foreigners." I doubt it. A Western dip-



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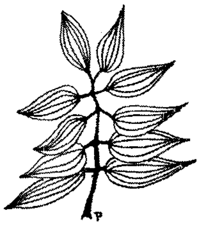
HARBOUR VILLAGE
Bonaire

lomat recalls being welcomed recently in a *gher* near the Gobi Desert: "We were far away from any road, and I asked the shepherd if we were the first foreigners he had ever received. 'The second,' he said, and he showed me a card left by the first—a scout from Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey, who had been there a few months before."

Ghers with power lines and a few other urban amenities now stand—seemingly for good—inside wooden enclosures in Mongolian cities, but nomadic herdsmen still regularly disassemble their homes, pack them on horseback or camelback, and drive their herds a hundred miles or more to fresh pastures, where the tents are reassembled in an hour or two. At a minimum, a *gher* encloses a hundred and seventy-six square feet, and it looks from the outside much as it did in Gilmour's time. (Since a well-made one may last for more than a century, some of those in use today may, in fact, date from his time.) White felt-and-canvas coverings enclose a circular framework of wooden poles or slats which rises to a height of about five feet and then slopes upward to a central roof vent. The door is hinged and made of wood, and invariably faces south, toward the sun. These days, though, there is likely to be a motorbike parked outside, and a portable generator nearby to power the owner's TV set and other modern appliances.



Mongolian nomads obtain meat and milk for nourishment and fleeces for some of their clothing from their animals; they heat their *ghers* and cook their meals with dried animal dung. It may not be an easy life, but it is close to being a self-sufficient one, and the more prosperous herdsmen are considered today—just as they have been historically—the rich people of Mongolia. One of the first acts of the new government was to legalize private ownership of herds, and most of the herdsmen I talked to had already bought all or most of their flocks from collectives. Their herds of camels, goats, sheep, cattle, and horses represent seventy per cent of the nation's gross agricultural output, and one of the economic problems that the Mongolian government is now grappling with is getting enough animals and animal by-products from the herds to feed and clothe the rest of the nation. While Mongolia has twenty-five million head of livestock (twelve animals for every man, woman, and child in the country), transport from the pastureland to the cities, where more than half the Mongols live, is extremely limited, and one in five Mongolian children is reported to be suffering from malnutrition.

Gilmour wrote that in Mongolia the planting and harvesting of crops "is resorted to just sufficiently to make it untrue to say that it is utterly unknown." Mongolians have a traditional reverence for pastureland—the Mongol warlord Genghis Khan is said to have decreed the world's first environmental-protection laws—and a traditional contempt for those who plow or otherwise violate Buddhist scriptural bans against disturbing "the earth's blessed sleep." Indeed, the arable land plowed for farms in the past seventy years amounts to only a little over three million acres—less than one per cent of the nation's total area—and the State Committee for Environment Control estimates that forty per cent of that acreage has been eroded. As an anti-erosion measure, cultivation of any additional pastureland is now prohibited. Some seventy state farms are included in the state property being auctioned, and President Ochirbat declared recently that "this process of denationalization will turn agriculture into an effective branch of the national economy." In the meantime, rationing has been instituted for rice, cooking oil, granulated sugar, green tea, flour, vodka, laundry soap and detergents, and even for meat and butter, two products that Mongolia has in surplus.

Last year, the government raised the controlled prices on skins, wool, and butter between thirty and seventy per cent, but the herdsmen I talked to seemed not to want to buy much in exchange. "I don't need any money, because I have my sheep," one told me. "The only thing I have to buy from town is flour—and maybe some of my clothes, if my wife doesn't feel like making them." The families who entertained us inside their *ghers* were as well dressed as any I encountered in Mongolia; one woman, having seen the approach of our jeep, ducked inside her doorway and received us a few minutes later in a frilly blouse, pedal pushers, stockings, and black high-heeled pumps.

Richly colored carpets hanging on the interior circumferences of some of the *ghers* I visited served the dual purpose of insulation and decoration. Furniture usually consisted of wooden cabinets painted orange, stacks of suitcases, and (a relatively recent innovation) metal-framed beds or cots. A panel of family photographs was often suspended from a part of the lattice framework. In the center of the *gher* was the hearth, an oven mounted on three flat stones. A stovepipe rose from the hearth to the vent above, which let in the only light. Hanging from this opening was a rope for anchoring the *gher* in high winds; in normal weather, it would be threaded through the interior lattice, in a pattern distinctive to the family's particular tribe.

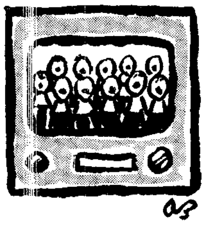
Leave whips and sticks outside—but do not remove your hat. Step over the *gher's* threshold (but not on it, which is bad luck). The interior space is divided—by custom, not by any physical partition—into halves: male guests sit on the left (or the west, since the door always faces south), and hosts and female guests on the right. The most senior in both groups sit farthest north, behind the hearth; the spaces nearest the door are occupied by children. There are customs even about sitting positions. Unless there are stools (and, happily, there were in most of the *ghers* I visited), guests sit on their left legs with their right knees up. Hosts take the opposite position. And, most important, feet should not be extended in the direction of the hearth.

Equally traditional is the refreshment. Guests arriving during warm weather are first offered a yogurtlike drink called *airaq*, made of fermented mare's milk and served in a brass bowl, having been drawn from a leather bag suspended against the tent wall. A drink of *airaq* may not be refused, although—fortunately for me, since I didn't care for it—it is possible to sip briefly and pass the bowl to other guests. Next come chunks of cheese, made of the same milk and served—along with bread, if any is available—on a single large plate, or on a single cloth on a table. "We have a saying," one host said when the cheese was set out. "Once people eat from the same plate, they are not allowed to struggle with each other." The cheese may be followed by bowls of distilled *airaq* (a clear vodkalike liquid), or by vodka itself, and then by Mongolian tea, which is a milk-colored broth combining Chinese green tea, *airaq*, salt, butter, and possibly a piece of mutton. If the visitors linger, it is likely that a member of the family will unobtrusively slip out of the *gher* to slaughter a sheep for a feast.

In return for this hospitality, travellers are supposed to bring the news of the outside world. However, since so many *ghers*, even in the remotest regions, have radios or TV sets, herdsmen are likely to know at least as much about recent events as their visitors. The ones I met knew all about Mongolia's privatization program, for example. One family I visited already owned thirty horses, seventy sheep, twenty camels, and ten cows. The husband was out tending to them, but his wife told me, through an interpreter, that the family had decided to buy more cattle with thirty per cent of their small vouchers and hadn't decided what to do with the rest.

Might she and her husband buy a car or a truck, and thus become less isolated from the rest of Mongolia?

My hostess smiled. "We don't need one, and we couldn't get gasoline for it anyway," she said. "But we have meat, some horses, and our boots, and enough people to do the work. We live better than the people in the towns." The costs of any household items the family needed to buy, she said, were more than covered by the income derived just from shearing their camels. "A kilogram of camel's hair brings forty-nine tugriks, and a good camel will produce six kilograms of hair a year," she said. After shearing expenses, this leaves an annual profit of more than five thousand tugriks, which is about twice the minimum wage paid to state workers in rural areas.



What were the animals themselves worth?

"For a sheep, depending on its size and how badly I want to sell it, I can get from three hundred to a thousand tugriks," she replied. "A camel for eating brings twenty-four hundred tugriks, but we might get from three thousand to four thousand for one trained to carry, and more than four thousand for one that's trained to be ridden."

I asked what would happen if her husband decided to buy or sell an animal and she disagreed.

"I would never quarrel with my husband," she said demurely. "But it is our tradition that the wife decides about sheep and goats. About camels, horses, and cows, the husband decides."

The *ghers* are not the only place where Mongolian hospitality manifests itself. In the four weeks I spent in the country, I never passed a group eating and drinking outside—in good weather, Mongols are picnicking people—without being asked to sit and share a bowl of *airaq* or vodka and whatever food was being eaten. One Sunday afternoon, I accepted the invitation of a group of eight people seated on a hillside at Manjshir, a monastery being reconstructed about fifty miles west of Ulaanbaatar. They had come to the hills to gather pinecones, which Mongolians enjoy nibbling on. Having packed their harvest into several large canvas bags, they were relaxing and listening to a tape of a Swedish rock group on a portable cassette player. One of them spoke a little English, and he told me that he had learned it in order to train on computers but was now unemployed. "My wife works in shops," he said. "She makes enough for us and our son to eat while I try to get money together to start my own business."

On that occasion, I was in the company of three other foreign journalists; we had been taken to Manjshir by a man named Zambra, who was unemployed but had a car at his disposal, and his friend Timorbaatar, the owner of a shop in Ulaanbaatar. (Like most Mongolians, particularly those in private life, they use only one name.) They had rounded us up at the Ulaanbaatar Hotel, and when I was asked if I wanted to join the group I assumed that it was a commercial venture—an ad-hoc excursion in competition with official tours of Manjshir organized by Juulchin, the government tourist agency. But Zambra, who drove, and Timorbaatar, who interpreted, brought along beer, bought lunch, and paid the five-tugrik-per-person fee to enter the preserve enclosing Manjshir, and then, after bringing us back to the capital, firmly refused

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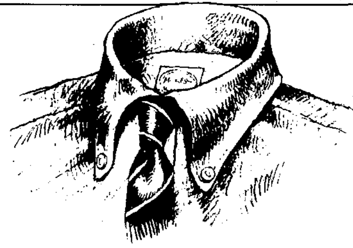

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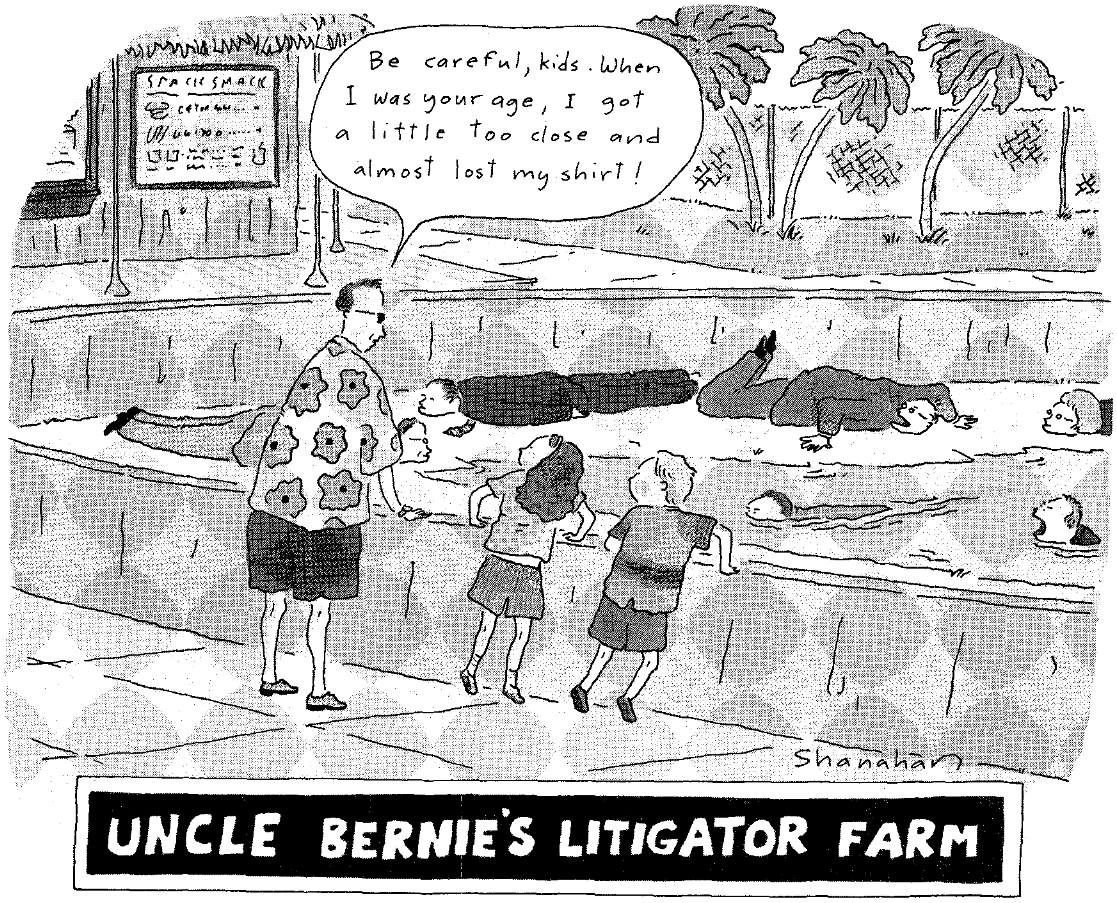

SNACK SHACK
Be careful, kids. When I was your age, I got a little too close and almost lost my shirt!
Shanahan
UNCLE BERNIE'S LITIGATOR FARM

to accept payment even for their expenses. We were guests of Mongolia, they insisted.

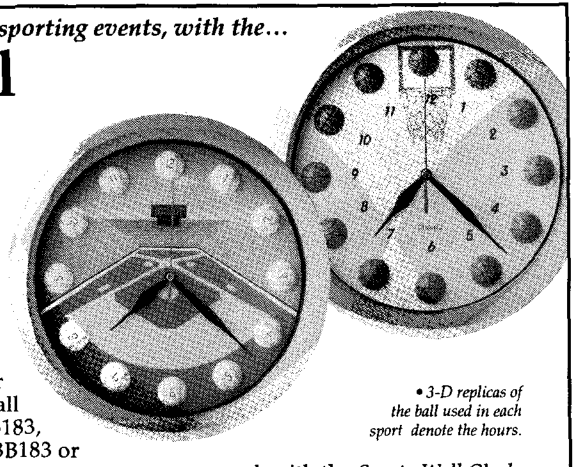
I arranged most of my travels within Mongolia through one of Juulchin's new competitors—Jigjidsanjaa Chanarav, a thirty-year-old lawyer turned tour leader. Sanjaa, as he asked to be called, bought tickets and escorted me and a few of my colleagues by plane and car all around the country. A trip from Ulaanbaatar to the ancient capital of Karakorum—a hundred and ninety miles, some of it over very rough roads—was undertaken in his Lada, a Russian-made sedan. It had bald tires, and suffered a number of blowouts, which Sanjaa and his driver would patch on the side of the road. On one of these occasions, a hunter rode up on horseback, with a gun slung over his shoulder, and wearing a paper headband topped with a pair of pointed ears that looked for all the world like those once worn by Playboy bunnies. After we declined, with thanks, his offer to be of assistance or at least to guide us to his nearby *gher* for refreshment, he rode off, and I asked Sanjaa what the ears were for. The man was hunting marmots, Sanjaa said, and explained that if a marmot should see him on the horizon, "the ears will fool it into thinking he's just another animal."

Less than a mile outside Karakorum is the valley from which Genghis Khan (Khan meaning "sovereign") set out, in the year 1206, on his wars of conquest. By the close of the thirteenth century, according to William of Rubrouck, a French monk who travelled in Asia at about the same time as Marco Polo, Karakorum was the principal intersection of Asian trade routes, and was marked by a twenty-seven-thousand-square-foot Palace of Universal Peace and a magnificent silver fountain that spouted *airaq*, mead, wine, and rice beer. The city lost its imperial status in 1267, however, when Kublai Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, moved his capital to Beijing, and in 1388 Karakorum was levelled by Chinese invaders. Two centuries later, during a revival of Mongol power, Altan Khan fought his way into Tibet, and after being converted to Buddhism he invited lamas to come to Karakorum. They began constructing a four-thousand-square-foot monastery, which they named Erdene Dzuu ("Hundreds of Treasures"). It took three centuries to complete, and then it was virtually destroyed in 1937, in a Communist anti-religious campaign that wiped out all but thirty-seven of Mongolia's seven hundred and twenty-four monasteries. Perhaps because so much work would have been required to demolish the outer walls of Erdene Dzuu and its hundred and eight stupas, these were left standing. All but three of seventy interior mosques and temples were razed, however, and the fate of the idols and hangings they had held was not known until 1965, when the Mongolian government declared the site a state museum and they were returned by religious Mongols who had spirited them away for safekeeping. The state is currently reconstructing a few of Erdene Dzuu's buildings, and in 1990 the government allowed returning monks the use of one as a chanting room for prayers. The monastery now has about sixty lamas, some of whom have returned after more than fifty years as "black men," or laymen, and some of whom are disciples in their teens.

Although it is the oldest of Mongolia's monasteries, Erdene Dzuu makes no claim to any religious primacy. For one thing, its buildings are still formally owned by the government, and, for another, it does not possess its own texts of the scriptures of Tibetan Buddhism—the hundred-and-eight-volume Kanjur and the two-hundred-and-twenty-six-volume Tanjur. Monks must recite prayers from photocopied pages of these texts. "The Dalai Lama has promised to give us the scriptures," one of the elder monks told me. "But we have to get the money to bring them here from India. And then we would like the holy Dalai Lama to come to this monastery, if only for an hour or so, and pray for us."

Another monastery where I saw prayers said from photocopied pages was Mani, in the province of South Gobi, which is on the Gobi steppe, east of the dunes of the Gobi Desert. Mani is a much smaller establishment than Erdene Dzuu, but it owns its cinder-block temple and is preparing the foundation for a second. A sixty-five-year-old monk named Gimbil told me that the lamas at Mani had managed to establish contact with a Buddhist monk in the United States, who was sending them eighty volumes of the scriptures. "He finds people who are coming here and asks them to carry them to us one or two volumes at a time," he said. Like all other Mongolians, Buddhist monks practice the traditional nomadic hospitality, and one of the guests at Mani was a white-mustached elderly man wearing the country's traditional *del* (a knee-length robe tied with a contrasting sash) and carrying a saddle. If we were travelling west, he asked (we were), could we give him a lift so that he could look for his runaway horse? He told our interpreter that he was seventy-one years old and for the past ten years had been living about a hundred and twenty miles to the south, close to the Chinese border. "It hasn't rained there for ten years, so I am looking for new pastureland," he said. "I stopped at the temple to pray, and although I hobbled my horse, I couldn't find it when I came out this morning." He thought he knew where the horse had gone, though—back to an oasis where he had stopped the previous night. After riding with us for about twenty minutes, he asked the driver to stop, strapped his saddle and his pack together over his shoulders, and, shaking off our appeals to let us take him at least to a *gher* somewhere, set out across the steppe toward an entirely flat and featureless horizon. I hope he found his horse.

ALTHOUGH several hundred Russian advisers remain in Mongolia, they are objects of occasional antagonism; I learned how to say "I do not speak Russian" in Mongolian, in order to fend off the approaches of those who mistook me for one. Many Mongolians speak Russian fluently; under Soviet domination, they were required to begin studying it in the fourth grade. And Ulaanbaatar, with its high-rise government ministries, its cinder-block housing developments, and its massive museums and Socialist-Realist statuary, is very much a Russian city. However, during my visit workmen on several downtown streets were busy erecting a number of ten- or twelve-



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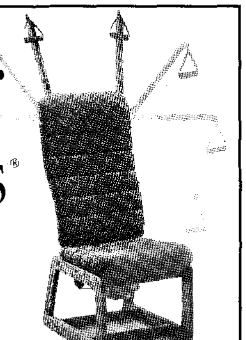

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foot-high Buddhist prayer wheels, and Chinese-style pagodas to house them; additional pagodas were being installed to serve as bus stops. "The wife of the dictator Tsedenbal was a Russian," I was told by one of my interpreters. "She made us pull down all our pagodas, because they were Chinese in origin. Now it seems to us that the capital is too European in style, so we are building them again."

Also appearing around the city—but still mostly affixed to government buildings—were the first few signs in the vertical Mongolian script, which is being restored to use. After the Second World War, the vertical script was replaced by a horizontal Cyrillic alphabet much like the Russian alphabet but expanded by two vowels. The Mongolian script is beginning to be used in the schools, with the goal of replacing Cyrillic teaching by 1994. Not all Mongolian scholars support this change, but the restoration of the script—along with the repopularization of the Mongolian *del* and the historical rehabilitation of Genghis Khan, who was turned into a non-hero by the Russians (whom one of his grandsons conquered)—is part of a program demanded by all the political parties.

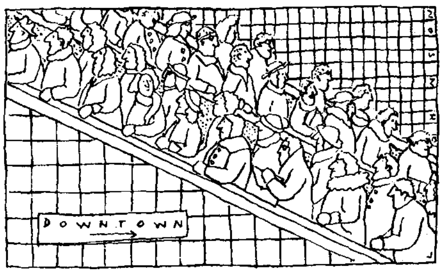
Cattle graze on the sidewalks of Ulaanbaatar, and in the small patch of park that borders Sukhbaatar Square. Many of the shelves in the markets are empty, and public transport, where it exists at all, is little short of decrepit, but longtime Western residents tell me that the choice of cheap items for sale at the *baraany zah* is an indication of great progress. "A year ago, they were literally selling tin cans," one said, "and now they're up to toys and clothes." The bazaar—one-tugrik admission for Mongolians, no charge for foreigners—is held on a fenced-in two-hundred-thousand-square-foot site in the northwestern part of the city. It opens at nine o'clock in the morning, and by eleven it is dangerously overcrowded with buyers and sellers and people doing both. According to the *Mongol Messenger*, a four-page English-language weekly published in the capital, it gathers, particularly on Sundays, "the largest number of people at one time anywhere in the country." Some of these, the *Messenger* admitted, are "trained and alert crooks"—a statement borne out when a gang of youths bowled over an American friend of mine, snatched his wallet, and disappeared into the crowd. They were, he said, "as professional as they come."

Other daytime attractions include Gandan, the only monastery that was permitted to function during the Stalinist-era repression of religion (guidebooks describe it as "the center of Sutra-Tantra Buddhism"), and five hotels, four theatres, five movie houses, the State Philharmonic Society auditorium, the State Circus (which I thought was terrific), eleven cafés, eight restaurants, six sports halls and stadiums, and a dozen museums, including the Museum of the Revolution, just off Sukhbaatar Square. In the newly nonrevolutionary land of Mongolia, this museum had been closed "for renovations," but the National Gallery of Mongolia, a few blocks away, was open and displaying traditional religious art, tapestries, sculpture, and, on the afternoon I visited it, an exhibit of thirty contemporary paintings by a native artist who seemed to me to have borrowed heavily from the French Impressionists. I am not sure which was more anachronistic—Impressionist paintings in a museum otherwise devoted to representative Mongolian art or the twenty-seven-year-old artist, Purevsuren, who was dressed in Mongolian *del*, pointed hat, and riding boots, in the setting of his Monet-like paintings. With a guide from the gallery interpreting, Purevsuren told me that he had never studied painting. "I picked it up by myself," he said.

How had he learned this particular style, then?

"From art books," he replied. "It is difficult to find such books here, but some of my friends were abroad and brought them back." His sale to the National Gallery was his first anywhere, he said, and his hope was that the proceeds would support his studies of Buddhist rock paintings and stone sculptures. "I'd like to get to know the minds of those who created that kind of art, and try to do it myself," he said.

Nightlife in Ulaanbaatar is for the most part restricted to the hotels, and thus reserved for foreigners and for the few Mongolians who manage, in one way or another, to get past the doormen. The best-attended bar is in the Ulaanbaatar Hotel, which is the city's largest hostelry. This bar opens at 10 P.M. and it accepts only American paper money; since a can of imported beer is a dollar and a half, there is a problem about change. In lieu of silver, patrons receive packages of bubble gum. While I was there, the patrons included a BBC television crew, several print journalists, foreign diplomats, staff members of United Nations agencies, circus talent scouts, oil prospectors, an investment banker from London, a British agronomist, an American Peace Corps official, a South Korean highway engineer, a Dutch veterinarian, two English trekkers, an American promoter of outdoor-advertising signs, and hunters of both the rifle and the bow-and-arrow variety.



In 1990, five hundred hunters came to Mongolia and spent the equivalent of three million dollars. The price of a package tour from San Francisco to hunt in Mongolia varies according to animal rarity and accessibility, with most of the money going to Juulchin. Deer hunters pay approximately forty-five hundred dollars—"a lot less than I'd pay in the Colorado Rockies," one of the hunters told me. Those who want to spend ten days hunting spiral-horned Marco Polo sheep are charged up to twenty-five thousand dollars, with no assurance that they will bag anything, although the Land Rovers that carry them into the mountains usually return with multiple sets of horns strapped to their racks. In principle, Mongolia protects seventeen endangered species, most notably the exceedingly rare snow leopard, but Luvsandamdingiin Nyam, of the State Committee for Environment Control, admitted to me that "frankly speaking, we get U.S. dollars from hunters, and the numbers of our animals have to be controlled," and that when the numbers of protected animals "are more than we need, we let hunters from foreign countries assist us."

Hunters constituted only five per cent of the ten thousand tourists who came to Mongolia in 1990, and the tourists made up only five per cent of all foreign visitors. The country's climate is such that almost all visitors arrange to come (as I did) between early May and the end of September, filling even the most expensive rooms

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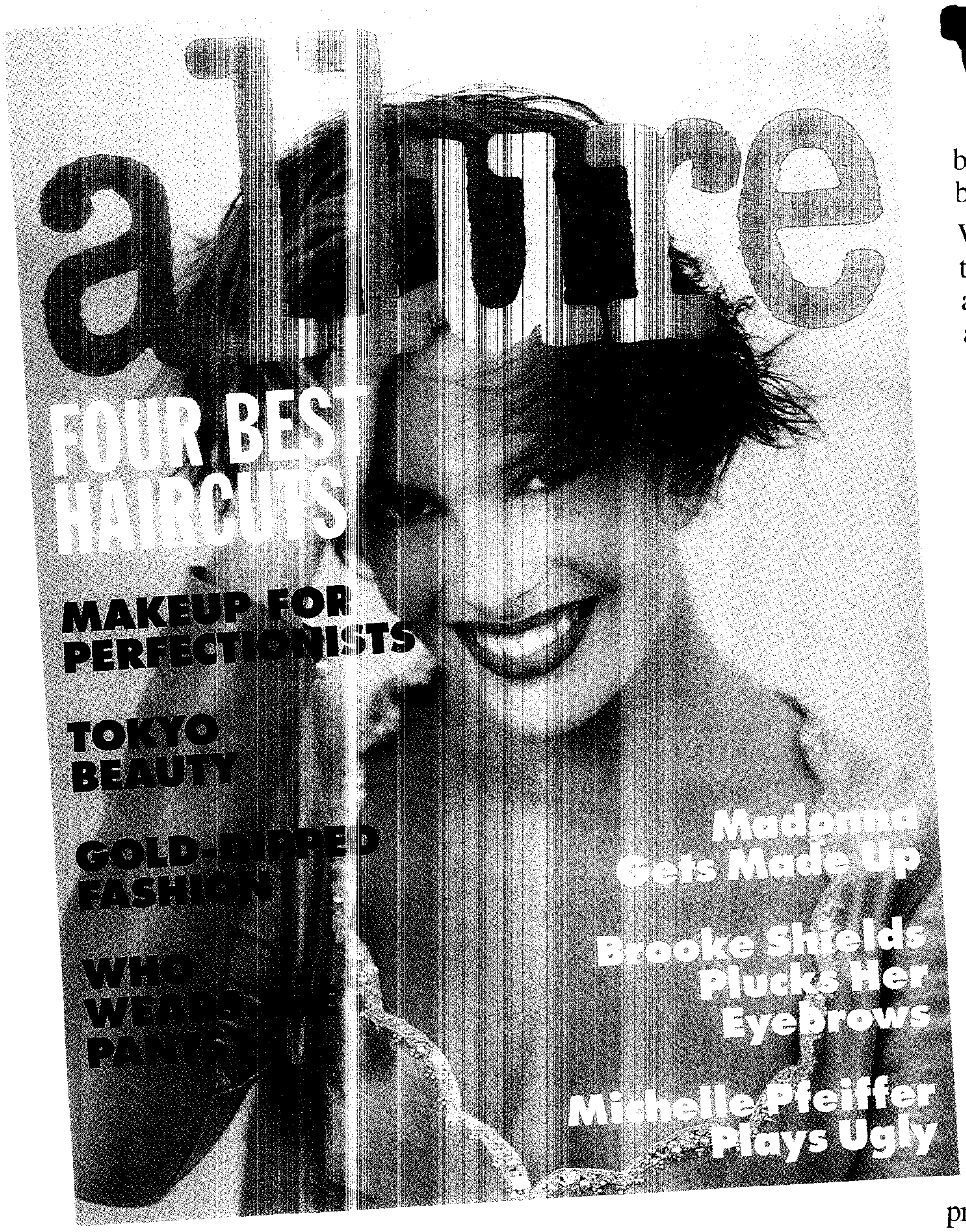

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(a hundred and twenty dollars a night) in the two hotels in Ulaanbaatar owned by Juulchin. A ten-story Holiday Inn franchise named after Genghis Khan was to have opened in the capital by now, but the Mongolian government came up about twenty million dollars short of the eighty-million-dollar construction and furnishing cost, and it appears that the hotel won't be receiving guests until next fall.

The Genghis Khan's hundred and eighty-four rooms may not even be needed. The breakup of the Eastern bloc, whose citizens have for many years been the predominant visitors to Mongolia, is expected to cut tourism revenues by thirty per cent. A reduction in the number of tourists may be just as well under current travelling conditions. Only three per cent of Mongolia's roads are paved; there are few private cars, and there is a critical shortage of gasoline; railroad service is virtually limited to a single north-south line connecting Russia with China; and an aging fleet of propeller-driven Soviet-built passenger airplanes is overcrowded with Mongols who have no other way to get around the country. There is also a health crisis. Mongolia has a hundred and twelve hospitals, and some fifteen hundred clinics and dispensaries in rural areas; it has enough physicians—largely Russian-trained—to give it a physician-to-population ratio of one to three hundred and ninety. (The United States, by contrast, has one doctor for every four hundred and four residents.) But it has almost no medicines for them to work with. Early in 1991, the government allocated twelve million dollars for the purchase of fourteen hundred necessary drugs, but shortly afterward the country all but ran out of hard currency and the shipments stopped. Substantial portions of recent international grants-in-aid have been reserved for medicines, but by mid-1991 the hospitals and the pharmacies had no more antibiotics, penicillin, X-ray film, anesthetics, iodine, or bandages. The first flight of American government assistance to Mongolia, last July, consisted of drugs, dressings, and medical equipment, which had originally been collected for the Gulf War.

Mongolia's government may be newly democratic, but it remains hesitant about dealing with the press and, in particular, with foreign reporters. After three days of tenuous negotiations with the Foreign Ministry about whom I might interview, I finally obtained—but not from the Foreign Ministry—the phone number of Dugersurengiin Suhjargalmaa, the press secretary to President Ochirbat. Suhjargalmaa is a fluent English speaker: she attended Manhattan's Julia Richman High School in the late sixties, when her parents were assigned to Mongolia's delegation to the United Nations. "I don't think this country can be compared to any other," she told me. "We are nomads, and our psychology is different from that of other people. Other countries can afford to play cards—China cards and Russia cards—and some of us would like to play those cards, too, but we don't have the trumps. We need friends in both of those countries—probably more in Russia than in China. But, although the Russians have dominated us for years, our cultures are so dissimilar that they could never assimilate."

A statue of Joseph Stalin, which used to stand near the State Public Library, on Lenin Avenue, was pulled down in November of 1990, and I asked Suhjargalmaa how long she thought one of Lenin would continue to stand in front of the Ulaanbaatar Hotel; it had already been splashed with paint several times.

"Not long," she replied. She promised to set up interviews with President Ochirbat and with people in several of the government ministries, but she warned me that they would be younger than I expected: the President himself, she said, was only forty-nine years old, and the average age of the members of his Cabinet was forty-three. "Until a few years ago, we always had leaders of senior age," she said, "but now a new generation in its late twenties and early thirties has cropped up, and the veterans don't know what to make of it. They're too old to change their ideas and too young not to be active. But what we're trying to do here is something that some of the other Eastern-bloc nations have been trying to do for almost ten years, and we have to do it in a country isolated from the rest of the world. Our advantage, though, is that we aren't trying to improve something that is dilapidated—like New York City, for instance. Starting from scratch is easier."

d. ehrenberg

HISTORICALLY, it is hard to discount the potential of the Mongols for making something out of almost nothing. Beginning with a population of little more than a million, Genghis Khan, his grandsons Kublai and Batu, and, later, Tamerlane assembled huge forces made up in large part of soldiers impressed from armies they conquered along the way, and cut a bloody swath through half the known world of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, at one point ruling an area from the Pacific coast of China to the Danube. By the sixteenth century, however, the empires of the great khans had broken up, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Mongols came under the control of the Manchu emperors. Pragmatically, the Manchus divided their territory into areas they could and could not control, and this division survives today: the southern fourth of the original Mongolia is now the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, and is populated predominantly by Han Chinese.

In 1911, the inhabitants of the northern three-quarters—the so-called Outer Mongolia, a territory comprising slightly more than six hundred thousand square miles of mountain, desert, and steppe—broke away from nominal Manchu control, only to come, in 1921, under the more stringent domination of the emerging Communists of Russia. Damdingiin Sukhbaatar, a nationalist leader who presided over the breakaway from China, died under mysterious circumstances, in 1923. His organization, the Mongolian People's Party, was transformed into the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, and within a decade the nation had effectively been made over in the Soviet mold. One of the more notable documents of the *perestroika* era is the text of a July, 1990, Soviet-Mongolian communiqué, in which the Soviet government apologizes for "repressions against Party, state, and military personnel, intellectuals, churchmen and other Mongolian citizens . . . in the situation generated by Stalinism." In the nineteen-thirties, two successive groups of Mongolian leaders and as many as fifteen thousand perceived enemies of the regime were executed, along with fifteen thousand monks, and the nation's powerful Buddhist monasteries were dismantled; the name of the nation's capital, Urga, was changed to Ulaanbaatar ("Red Hero" in Mongolian); the Cyrillic script took over from the Mongolian; the collectivization of the nation's herds and its few farms was begun; and a large Mongolian standing army was conscripted and trained. The army was put to use in 1939, when Mongolian and Soviet forces jointly defeated an invasion of Japanese troops intent on adding Mongolia to Manchukuo, Japan's puppet state in northeastern China. After the Second World War, on orders from Stalin, there was a Soviet-style election: Mongolians were offered the choice of Chinese rule or nominal independence under Soviet domination, and more than ninety-eight per cent were reported to have voted for the latter.

It is generally believed that the only reason Stalin afforded Mongolia a measure of formal independence was to secure for it (and thus for the Soviet Union) another vote in the United Nations General Assembly. The M.P.R.P.'s General Secretary, Khorlogiin Choybalsan, took his cues from Stalin from 1932 until his death in 1952 (and, like Stalin, he was subsequently accused of having established a personality cult). The rule of his successor, Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal, was bolstered by a force of five Soviet divisions, which were stationed along the Mongolian-Chinese border after the Sino-Soviet rift of 1960. Tsedenbal hung on till 1984; his retirement, apparently involuntary, was announced by the government in Ulaanbaatar while he was on a visit to Moscow.

"You must remember that Russia did some very good things for us," Jalbuugiin Choinkhor, Mongolia's First Deputy Foreign Minister, told me. "We shared universal values, in terms of politics, culture, and development." Indeed, through 1987 (the latest year for which such statistics are available) as many as eleven thousand graduates of Mongolian secondary and vocational schools pursued advanced study at universities and technical schools in the U.S.S.R. Almost all the Mongols I spoke to had received English-language instruction in Soviet institutions. The Russians also established a high level of education in Mongolia: its literacy rate was ten per cent in the nineteen-twenties and is now close to ninety per cent. A Mongolia Country Study, published last year by the Library of Congress, estimates that in 1985 ninety per cent of the population had been reached by national radio broadcasting and more than sixty per cent by television. The construction, with Soviet aid, of a radio and television broadcast center in Ulaanbaatar in 1988 and the establishment of nearly four hundred broadcasting relay stations have increased the reach of the electronic media even in areas still without electrification, since so many nomadic families operate television sets and radios by means of portable generators. There are some ninety regional and national newspapers and magazines (including one entitled, in translation, *Sin & Virtue*). The *Mongol Messenger*, which began publication last July under the auspices of Montsame, the state's news agency, claims editorial independence; its editor, Burenbayar Chanravyn, promised in his first issue to report "how people are breaking ideological fetters, and are overcoming the diktat of the Party and dogmatic thinking." One afternoon, when I visited the *Messenger* office, on the fourth floor of the Montsame building, I found Chanravyn laying out a front page that included the headline "GUNSHOTS IN DOWNTOWN" above a story reporting the killing of two men in the center of Ulaanbaatar. "Won't that upset the tourism people?" I asked the editor.

He shrugged. "I can't help it, that's the news," he said.

Despite its Montsame connections, the *Messenger*, which has a staff of five and a circulation of a thousand, suffers the same ills that afflict other Mongolian publications, most of which share the facilities of a single printing plant and are dependent on government allotments of newsprint, currently in short supply. Recently, the *Messenger's* publication was held up for three days by the non-arrival of photo-offset-processing film. Many regional and opposition-party newspapers have been reduced from publishing weekly to publishing once every ten days. Even the M.P.R.P. newspaper, *Unen*, has seen its schedule cut back from five

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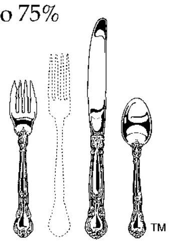

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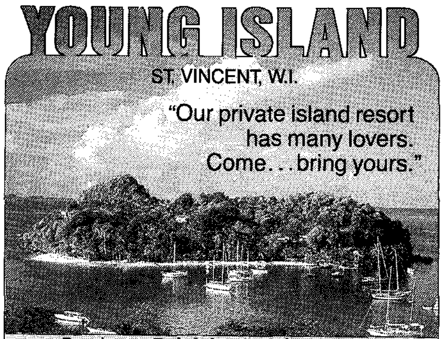

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days a week to three, its staff halved to sixty, and its circulation reduced from a hundred and eighty thousand to forty thousand. *Unen* is a *Pravda* look-alike (its name, too, translates as "truth") and, like *Pravda*, in recent years it has found itself in the uncomfortable position of opposing the government controlled by the party it represents. In 1989, it published a front-page editorial headlined "DEMOCRACY OR ANARCHY?" which questioned the speed of national reforms, and last July it called for Mongolians to "struggle" against the government. Unlike *Pravda*, which was temporarily silenced after supporting last summer's failed coup in the Soviet Union, the publication of *Unen* was uninterrupted, although, as *Pravda* did, it switched its allegiance to its party's reform faction.

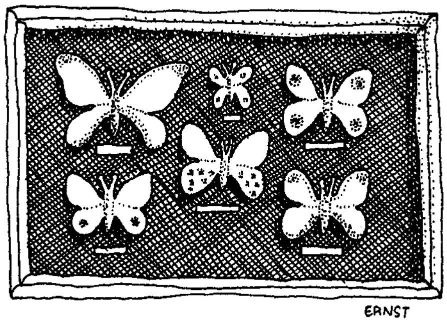
The Soviet Union also constructed industrial centers and extensive blocks of high-rise housing in the capital and in Mongolia's two other northern cities: Erdenet, the site of what is believed to be the largest copper mine in Asia, and Choybalsan, constructed as a railhead center. All this was by no means charity: in exchange for the services of their soldiers, engineers, and construction teams, the Soviet Union and other members of the Soviet-controlled Council for Mutual Economic Assistance drew upon the Mongolian Republic's natural resources—including large deposits of uranium, which were discovered in the early nineteen-eighties near Choybalsan. Mongolians and many international economists contend that the amounts paid for the country's minerals and precious metals were well below world rates, but so, in fairness, was the price that the Mongolians paid for Soviet oil. However this trade was constructed, the Mongolians came out behind, building up a debt to the Soviet Union equivalent to more than sixteen billion American dollars. Payment of both interest and principal has been deferred to the year 2000, but at the beginning of 1991 the Soviet Union put its trade with Mongolia on a dollars-only basis.

The first indication that Mongolia might be easing itself out of the Soviet orbit came in 1984; that year, a Mongolian delegation visited Beijing, returning with an agreement to negotiate trade and to verify border questions left unsettled in 1946, when the People's Republic of China recognized the independence of the Mongolian People's Republic. (The Taiwan government still refuses to recognize Mongolian independence from China.) In 1986, President Mikhail Gorbachev announced that Soviet forces would be withdrawn from Mongolia's Chinese border, and whether this step was taken, as he then said, in the interests of improving Sino-Soviet relations or was simply the beginning of a worldwide cutback of Soviet troops abroad, the Red Army soldiers now remaining in Mongolia reportedly number only in the hundreds, and most of them are occupied in closing bases.

As the Soviets pulled out, the Chinese pushed in—not with soldiers but with diplomats and promises of aid. Last August saw the first official visit to Mongolia by a Chinese head of state, when President Yang Shangkun of the People's Republic signed a trade protocol granting about ten million dollars in interest-free credits and promised to respond to a Mongolian need that has existed since the retreat of the great khans: China, he said, would allow transportation of Mongolian freight on its rail line from the Mongolian-Chinese border to the Chinese port of Tianjin, and after seven hundred years or so Mongolia would again have a direct outlet to the sea. In order to take full advantage of this offer, however, Mongolia will have to perform a symbolic—but expensive—kowtow. Its own railroad tracks, now laid on the Russian standard of 1.524 metres, will need to be reconstructed to the Chinese—and international—standard of 1.435 metres; for passengers, the inconvenience of a delay of several hours to change carriage axles on the Trans-Siberian and Trans-Mongolian Railroads will be shifted north from Erenhot, on the Chinese border, to Naushki, on the Russian border.

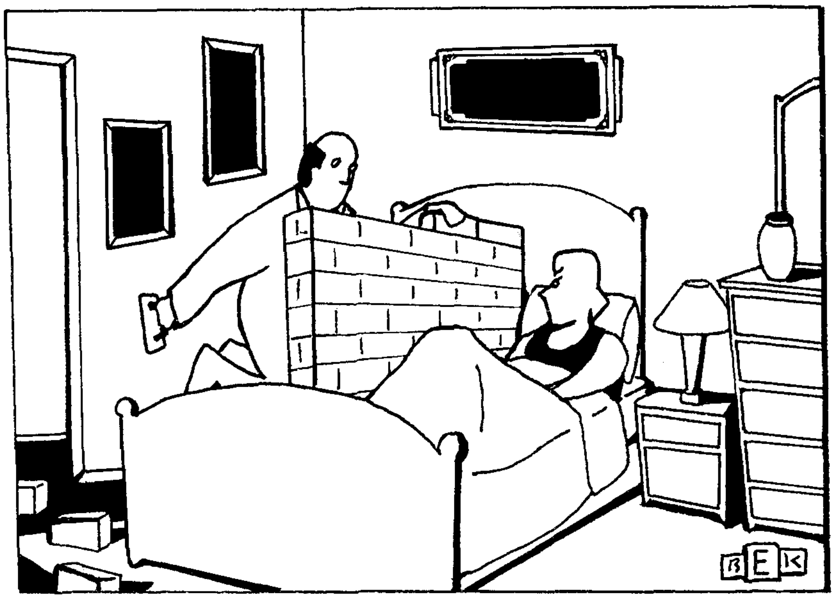
"Getting along with both Russia and China must be the most difficult tightrope walk in history," a Western diplomat stationed in Ulaanbaatar observed recently. "Yes," President Ochirbat said, when the remark was repeated to him, "and Mongolia has been walking it for hundreds of years." China has also been walking a tightrope, however, in supporting Mongolia's freedom from Russian control and at the same time suppressing nationalistic movements among the three million six hundred thousand ethnic Mongols in Inner Mongolia. The human-rights organization Asia Watch cites a dissident estimate that fifty thousand Chinese Mongols were killed during the Cultural Revolution, and it charges that the Communist authorities of that region have now begun another crackdown on the members of organizations attempting to foster traditional Mongolian culture and identity.

The tightrope act has been complicated by China's relations with the Dalai Lama, who symbolizes opposition to Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. The Dalai Lama made two visits, as a private citizen, to Mongolia before 1989, when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; since then he has become increasingly objectionable to the Chinese government. His third unofficial visit to Mongolia, scheduled for last July, a month before the quite official visit of President Yang, was abruptly cancelled by the Mongolian government, because of what a Foreign Ministry spokesman described as "strong pressure" from the Chinese. Several weeks after Yang's departure, however, Deputy Foreign Minister Choinkhor passed the word to the Dalai Lama that he would again be unofficially welcome. "We told the Chinese he would not come before Yang's visit, but the Dalai is a world leader of Buddhism, and we are a Buddhist country, and our Buddhists would like to see him," he told visiting Western reporters. "If he comes, though, it will be as a religious leader, not as a guest of the government." The day after that message was reported in Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, the Dalai Lama's visit to Mongolia was rescheduled. He stayed three days, during which he visited the Gandan monastery and conducted a prayer service that filled the largest stadium in Ulaanbaatar. The visit had some state trappings, including a carpet rolled out to the Dalai Lama's plane and accommodations for his party



at the State Guesthouse; the Chinese government, however, contented itself with a pro-forma protest note, restating its opposition to "visits of the Dalai Lama in whatever capacity to countries having diplomatic relations with China."

The United States had no diplomatic relations at all with Mongolia until 1987. Secretary of State James Baker has since visited Mongolia twice, and President Ochirbat visited Washington last January, to request, among other things, "most-favored nation" status (something that the United States had granted to all countries except eleven Communist-bloc—or former Communist-bloc—nations). President Bush immediately authorized aid in the form of eight million dollars' worth of food credits, and an additional one and a half million dollars for education, and in October Congress granted the most-favored-nation status. Last year also saw the initiation of a Peace Corps program, which now operates with twenty-one volunteers, most of them English teachers, in Ulaanbaatar. Joseph E. Lake, a career foreign-service officer, is the American Ambassador, a post he has held for the past eighteen months. He runs a small shop. Five positions are allotted to Americans, but on the afternoon that I visited the Embassy, a modest two-story building faced with cement, only one deputy was in the country and the Ambassador's teen-age son was manning the reception desk. "Mongolia is a country that can make it," Lake told me. "It has a small, relatively homogeneous population and a simple economy, in world terms, with a strong agricultural base. It's apparently rich in natural resources, and it is the only country in its stage of development that has a literacy rate of ninety per cent. This is a place where Americans—if we believe what we say about democracy and free enterprise—can affect the future. The Mongolians are now trying to restructure their economy and their government on the basis of the ideals we believe in. If they succeed, this country, as an island of democracy, could be very important to the world."



TO KEEP HIMSELF OCCUPIED, WALTER WAS ALWAYS FINDING LITTLE PROJECTS AROUND THE HOUSE.

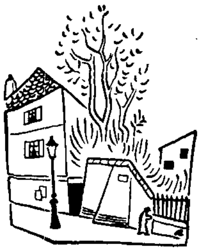
• •

THE arid Gobi, for which Mongolia is probably best known, actually constitutes only a third of its landscape. In the north and west of the country, three mountain ranges, the highest of them the Altai, extend down from Siberia. With an average elevation of more than five thousand feet above sea level, Mongolia has the unfortunate distinction of possessing both the world's southernmost permafrost and its northernmost desert. But only about a third of the Gobi is actual desert, the rest being, in the words of the 1991 Library of Congress study, "arid rangeland with insufficient vegetation to support marmots but with enough to support camels." Animals that are more delicate and beautiful survive there as well. One afternoon, as we were driving across the rangeland, eight or nine gazelles ran up behind our jeep, which was moving at a speed of forty miles an hour, and paced us effortlessly for several miles. Then, one by one, they put on an extra burst of speed, cut in front of us, and disappeared into a ravine. During this race, one of our guides offered to shoot one—illegally—for our dinner, and was amused at our outraged reaction.

I had travelled to the Gobi with Kevin Murphy, a reporter for the *South China Morning Post*, and, as we came to realize, we had contributed to the degradation of the Gobi simply by letting our guides drive off the road. "Once you drive a new road here, it won't disappear for a hundred years," one of the residents told us. Already obtrusive across this vast rangeland are the crisscrossings of trucks, jeeps, and motorbikes, and when we stopped at Dalandzadgad, the capital of the province of South Gobi, Zandra, the provincial administrator, and his secretary, Majorgal, questioned us not only about those tracks but about other environmental sacrifices that might be required in order to promote tourism. (A unique—and refreshing—aspect of reporting in Mongolia is that its officials ask for, and truly appear to consider, the opinions of journalists and others who turn up there.)

"Will we have to make new roads that could spoil the land?" Zandra asked us. "We want tourists to come here, as you have, and see this untouched land, but if too many come the animals will move to other places, and the main support of our province's economy is our animals—more than a million of them, mostly camels and goats. We have the largest number of camels in Mongolia, and we process their meat and hair for the rest of the country."

I'm afraid our answer to the two officials was yes, they probably would need to build new roads. Already under construction just north of Dalandzadgad is Mongolia's second international airport, which will be the only one outside Ulaanbaatar to have sufficient runway space for the 757 jet that MIAT, the national airline, recently ordered. The airport is scheduled for completion in 1993, and Zandra told us he was worried about its environmental effect. "Although we will be trying our best to get lots of tourists, if we have to improve communications, power, and roads, what will that do to our beautiful nature?" he asked. The province had already ordered a small power station from South Korea, but Majorgal said that it would be as nonpolluting as possible. "We made an experiment on all the projects we were considering, and this was one that didn't make the air dirty," he said. "It's very expensive, but it should be a good one." (The talk of airports and power stations provoked the interest of one of our guides, who numbered among his functions the chairmanship of the province's Youth and Sports Committee. "Do you think we could bring international sports to the Gobi?" he asked after guiding us around the town's Sports Palace, which had basketball and volleyball courts but no basketballs or volleyballs. Dalandzadgad, he told us, was also the home of a national cycling champion, who had been without a racing bicycle since his broke down three years earlier.)



The government of the South Gobi, like the national government, is run by the M.P.R.P., but members of opposition parties sit in the province's Hural and work in its administration. However, leaders of two of the opposition parties—Tseveg, of the Mongolian Democratic Party, and Dayen, of the Mongolian Party for National Progress—conceded that they would not be able to contest next July's legislative elections effectively. "The M.P.R.P. has all the jeeps and gasoline," Tseveg said. "We don't have an opportunity to get information out to the people ourselves." Besides, said Dayen, political recruiting is not in the Mongolian tradition, "so if we did it, nobody would join us anyway." What they did, he said, was to hold meetings "that we ask our members to bring their friends to." The two party leaders appeared to work closely with each other—so closely that one often finished a sentence begun by the other. I asked how they differed. "We are the neoconservatives," said Dayen, whose party stresses the return to Mongolian national traditions. "And we are the liberals," Tseveg said. "But actually we don't have any big differences." A merger had been discussed, he continued, "but that question will not be decided by either of us but in Ulaanbaatar."

I soon learned, on my travels around the country, that while getting out of Ulaanbaatar is not terribly difficult it is not always easy to get back. Round-trip reservations on MIAT are nonexistent, and seats on return flights, negotiated for on the plane after it lands, may not be obtainable—at least, not without a substantial tip to the crew, or the wielding of considerable influence. In part because of the nation's critical shortage of fuel, MIAT's domestic flights are limited to a hub system: planes fly once a day from Ulaanbaatar out to Mongolia's seventeen provinces and return. Not until after we were airborne from Dalandzadgad did I learn that our seats back to Ulaanbaatar had been acquired only through an appeal by the resourceful Sanjaa to Zandra, the provincial administrator.

"Does that mean we bumped people off the plane?" I asked guiltily.

"I don't think so," Sanjaa replied. "Look around you."

I did, and saw several rows in which three adults—and in one case an adult and three children—had been crammed into seats designed for two. The plane, with a nominal capacity of fifty passengers, was carrying at least sixty.

I also travelled with Sanjaa out to Bayan Olgii, the westernmost province in Mongolia. Whereas the Gobi is looking toward an influx of people, Bayan Olgii is anticipating mass departures. It is one of the largest provinces in population, but ninety-six per cent of its ninety-two thousand residents are Kazakhs, and, with the blessing of Mongolia, many have already accepted, or are considering accepting, invitations to emigrate to Kazakhstan, which lies just to the west. ("We can't say we're going *back* to Kazakhstan," one of them told me, "since most of our grandparents came to Mongolia from China.")

The Kazakhs don't share the Mongol prejudice against agriculture, but not much grows anyway in this dry, barren region in the Altai Mountains. West of Olgii, the provincial capital, is what I can describe only as a broad inclined stone plane wedged into a mountainside. Perched on this plane, and on the city's perimeter, are a number of fence-enclosed communities of *ghers*. The city center consists primarily of cinder-block apartment buildings, a hotel, a theatre, several factories (for wool scouring and carpet weaving), and a government office building. The office building fronts on a square that is much smaller than Sukhbaatar Square but is apparently modelled on it. In the square is a statue of a mounted Kazakh with a hunting eagle tucked under his arm, and scratched into its pedestal was a lengthy Cyrillic-lettered graffito, which I asked Sanjaa if he could read. "I can read it, but you won't believe it," he said. "It's a poem: 'Cement is my life, and my life is cement, and it is very dangerous, but I want to kiss you, my cement.' "

In recent years, Mongolia has gone to great lengths to accommodate its Kazakhs. Three of Bayan Olgii's four secondary schools and all its primary schools are conducted in the Kazakh language, although Mongolian and Russian are also taught. All the officials I met there were Kazakhs. ("We preserved our traditions here," a Mongolian-speaking Kazakh told Sanjaa. "I studied in Kazakhstan. The people there don't even speak the pure Kazakh language—it is mixed with Russian.") Following the rallies that led to the democratic changes in Mongolia's central government, many Kazakhs supported a proposal to form an independent republic of their own in Bayan Olgii, but this was successfully opposed by, among others, a Kazakh named Hahaar, who is the provincial correspondent of *Unen*. "Independence from what?" he asked me rhetorically. "From the thirty million tugriks' worth of help we need from the central government every year? Look around you. We have no industry, no wheat, no grass, no coal, no wood." Late in 1990, when the government of Kazakhstan invited all ethnic Kazakhs to migrate to that republic, Mongolia said that it had no objection if its Kazakhs—and particularly some eight thousand who were unemployed—signed three-to-five-year contracts to work there. By last September, nearly four thousand Kazakhs had left. Kazakhstan had sent trucks and trailers to load up the *ghers* of still more Kazakh families, and Mizamhan, the provincial administrator, told me that he expected that ultimately three thousand workers, with thirteen thousand dependents, would leave. "Most of those going are agricultural workers, but we are also losing teachers, engineers, and doctors," he said.

"What will happen to them if they don't return when their contracts expire?" I asked.

"That's their human right," he said, "and we don't have the right to disturb them."

The prospect of further emigration appeared to have had an effect on life in Bayan Olgii. "Nobody is working here anymore, so the rest of us can't get anything done either," one civil servant complained. "People who used to show up at their jobs every day at nine are now getting in at ten or later—if they come in at all—and those who should be out taking care of the land are just sitting and waiting to go to Kazakhstan." Paradoxically, however, recent changes in national Mongolian politics had put some of Bayan Olgii's politicians to work. The M.P.R.P. no longer receives income from the government, and officers of its local branch had installed three sewing machines in the Party building, on which Party members were fashioning embroidery for sale. ("Imagine that," I was told by a disaffected M.P.R.P. member. "Karl Marx's party is running a sweatshop.")

Lately, there have been indications that the tide of emigration to Kazakhstan may be slowing. I stayed in Bayan Olgii only three days, but during that time half a dozen trucks from Kazakhstan waiting in the parking lot across the street from Olgii's hotel to transport Kazakh *ghers* across the border drew not a single taker. On the third day, one of the drivers posted a handwritten sign in the hotel's window: "Kazakhs who want to move . . . We are here with the trucks, and we are ready to help you." One reason for the lack of interest, apparently, was the realization that, bad as things were in Mongolia, they might well be worse in Kazakhstan. There were also the discouraging accounts of some who had emigrated. "One man I heard about who is a graduate of two universities can't find any job at all," a Kazakh told me. "Another, who is an engineer, is working as a herdsman. Some of these young people have written back that they want to come home, but they can't—they signed contracts."

One afternoon, Sanjaa drove us thirty miles west of Olgii to Sagsay, a town that in many respects resembles the set of an old Hollywood Western. (One difference was that those who rode into town and tied up their horses to the hitching post in front of the general store wore *dels* and pointed hats and were not armed.) There we were welcomed at a *gher* where a young Kazakh who had a job (in fact, two—as a teacher and as a promoter of sports events) said he was sure that his family would soon be emigrating to Kazakhstan. "Some of our relatives are already there, and if my cousins all go I will go, too. They are opening a Kazakh nation there, and I do not wish to live in any highly developed country but to stay in my tradition." As he continued rattling off reasons for going, an older man came into the *gher* and seated himself quietly to listen. When it was his turn to speak, he said, gravely and deliberately, "I am a teacher, too. I have worked here thirty-four years. Next year, I will retire, and Mongolia will take care of me. My living conditions are good, and this is my motherland. My father and grandfather are buried in this land, and I want my children to bury my body here." I hadn't realized that there was a family connection between the two men—though I should have noticed that this speaker, too, sat on the family side of the *gher*. However, as the older man spoke, consternation in the younger man became apparent. "If my father does not go," he said, slowly and sadly, "then, of course, I cannot go, either."

THIS winter ushers in the Monkey Year, which in the twelve-year cycle of the Chinese calendar has a fearsome significance for Mongols—particularly those old enough to remember famines in 1944. Monkey Year winters are said to be particularly cold—and this in a land where winter temperatures average twenty degrees below zero, and lows of forty below are to be expected—with heavy snowfalls and large losses of animals. A Gobi shepherd told me that his people believe that hot summers (as last year's was) are always followed by cold winters, and Zandra, South Gobi's administrator, noted in the second week of September that the weather was "already cold and rainy, and ice is on the ground, so we know we have to prepare for a hard winter." The country's gross harvest declined in 1990 and again in 1991, and by last August

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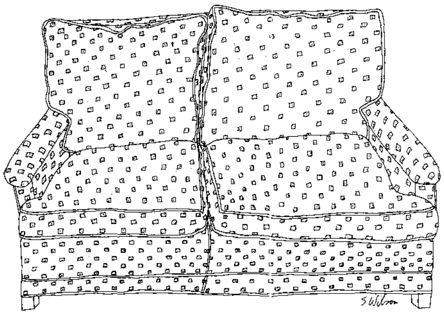
several provinces were reported to have exhausted their supplies of potatoes, vegetables, soap, candles, and matches. But the problems are probably less severe in the countryside than they are in Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet, and Choybalsan. Snowfalls make unpaved roads impassable, blocking food supplies that come by truck, and interrupt rail deliveries of the coal to fuel the power plants that provide heat for the massive housing projects left behind by the Russians. Forty-five per cent of Ulaanbaatar's residents live in *ghers* and can get their heat from fires of animal dung (which is obtainable even in the cities), but a shutdown of any of the capital's obsolete and worn power plants could bring disaster to the rest of its people. "Those concrete housing blocks could turn into ice caverns," a Western diplomat told me.

In the hope of bringing Mongolia through the winter without famine and other undue hardship, representatives of fourteen countries and five international organizations met in Tokyo in September and promised a hundred and fifty-five million dollars in immediate assistance. One of the more startling aspects of this package was that the United States offered its ten-million-dollar contribution on the condition that Mongolia purchase industrial spare parts not from America but from what was then the Soviet Union. The practical reason for that condition becomes apparent on the drive into Ulaanbaatar from the airport, or on the rail approach from the north. All day, and virtually all night, the city's three operating power plants emit black, sulfurous columns of coal smoke, which suffuses the air of the entire region. These rickety, aging plants are Soviet-built; they supply electricity to thirty per cent of the nation's territory, which contains roughly half its population, and also produce the steam that heats the capital's housing projects and government offices. A fourth generator has been shut down for lack of parts, and power outages are frequent. And on September 25th the winter's first snow fell on Ulaanbaatar. In November, the worst storms in thirty years—with three times the usual snowfall, and temperatures of twenty-two degrees below zero—were recorded, with consequent losses of tens of thousands of animals in the countryside.

With the new aid, Mongolia hopes to build another coal-fired generator (with, it promises, better emission controls) at Ulaanbaatar, and two hydropower plants in the north and west. Pollution is not limited to the capital. Factory, mining, and agricultural effluents, along with desertification, are diminishing Mongolia's principal asset—its three hundred and five million acres of range and pastureland. Because of the proscription against disturbing the land, oil and mineral prospectors have so far been limited to seismic-exploration techniques, but early last year the government promised to "accelerate mining and drilling work" and to allocate "drilling and mineral rights to potential investors." Mongolia's Ministry of Trade and Industry currently estimates the nation's mineral wealth at seven hundred and fifty billion dollars. Soviet engineers, indifferent to the Mongolians' feelings about digging into Mongolian ground, found and exploited deposits of coal, copper, gold, molybdenum, uranium, and other minerals but gave up on Mongolia's oil-producing potential in the nineteen-fifties. Now Mongolia's state petroleum company and a consortium of foreign oil companies have hired a resource-survey firm, Western Geophysical, of Houston, to attempt to verify oil reserves believed to lie under the sands of the Gobi and elsewhere in the eastern half of the country. Bids in the first auction of likely-looking oil tracts are scheduled to be opened on January 31st, but oil prospectors I met in Ulaanbaatar told me that even if oil is found in sufficient quantities, actual production will probably not begin for ten years.

Mongolian workers pay no income taxes (government revenues come, in theory, from customs duties, a value-added tax, and the profits of the state enterprises), but wage scales are also extremely low. The minimum wage was recently set at five hundred and sixty tugriks (fourteen dollars) a month, although skilled workers in Ulaanbaatar average as much as twelve hundred. Families with at least two incomes were able to manage as long as prices were tightly controlled, but controls began to come off early in 1991, and now extend only to rent and the costs of fuel, electricity, telephones, leather, meat, flavoring, rice, bread, sugar, butter, vegetables, green tea, and baby food. Sometime this year, the government has warned, all price controls will be lifted.



One afternoon in Ulaanbaatar, I asked Odelveg, a civil engineer now working mostly as a free-lance interpreter, why he was not practicing the profession for which he had been trained. "The best job I could hope for is in a factory, where I might average twelve hundred tugriks a month," he said. "My family expenses are two hundred tugriks a month for rent, two hundred for electricity, and maybe two hundred for heat. Our twelve-kilo ration of mutton costs a hundred and forty-four tugriks, and then we have to pay in the food stores about three hundred a month for additional mutton, rice, and sugar. And then my son's kindergarten is a hundred and fifty a month more. It all adds up to eleven hundred and ninety-four—that's six tugriks a month left over."

At least Odelveg has been able to find work. The state is cutting the size of its civil service, and, with almost all construction projects in the country at a standstill, Mongolia is now confronting widespread unemployment, a problem it was never faced with as a Communist state, when it had the power to assign workers to its own factories. Figures on the number of jobless workers vary, but the number supplied by President Ochirbat last September was seventy-six thousand, constituting perhaps ten per cent of the nation's working population. The International Monetary Fund estimated the 1990 national unemployment rate at fifteen per cent, and Jan Wong, of the Toronto *Globe & Mail*, after an extensive survey of the country last summer, estimated the rate in the cities at about twenty per cent.

There is a system of unemployment pay—or, rather, several systems, since each province determines its own rate. Factories in Ulaanbaatar are required to provide laid-off workers with payments of two hundred and ten tugriks a month for five months. In Bayan Olgii, unemployed workers may apply for onetime payments of as much as two thousand tugriks, and most of those accepting these payments are ethnic Kazakhs financing their journeys into Kazakhstan. Although there is also a nationwide program of tax incentives for factories that hire unemployed workers from labor registries at provincial hiring halls, the one hiring hall I visited—in the former building of the Ulaanbaatar city council—was inactive and almost totally deserted. Labor Vice-Minister Khuyagiin Ganbaatar said that Ulaanbaatar's highest percentage of unemployed is among drivers and builders. "Although the countryside needs both, they don't want to go there because of the big difference in the standard of living," he said.

"What work would be available in the countryside for builders?" I asked.

"The situation is quite different," he replied. "The countryside has its own materials—wood, for instance. They could build fences for the sheep."

And what about drivers?

"That is a tough problem," he said, "but they could be employed to drive camels and horses."

Personally, I doubt whether urban Mongols trained as builders and drivers can be recruited to go to the countryside to put up sheep fences and drive camels, but perhaps this plan is no more visionary than a suggestion put to me by Rentsengiin Batmend, the Deputy Minister for National Development: he feels that future employment may come from the manufacture of high-technology products, including computer parts and semiconductors. "If we could produce these things in our country, it would improve our technical capacity," he told me, "but we would not try to catch up on all computer systems, and we would not give priority to high technology."

I asked what Mongolia would give development priorities to.

"The first has to be development of skills and the training of workers for the market economy," he said. "No. 2 has to be the development of our natural resources, and particularly our herds. The third is a program to encourage small and middle-sized enterprises that will quickly repay their investment costs. Fourth is to establish a better energy system. And fifth is to set up a good infrastructure for our civil aviation."

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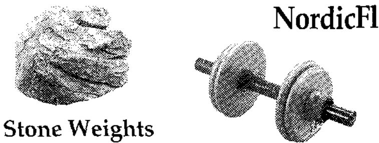
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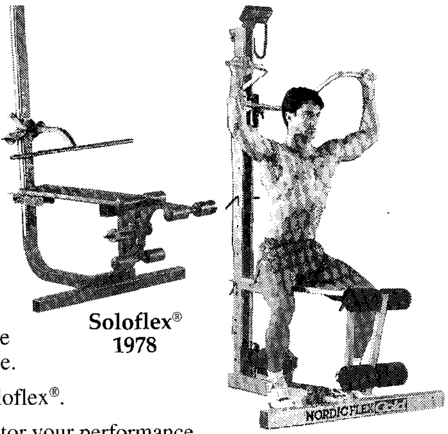

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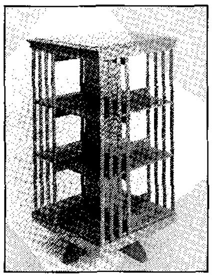
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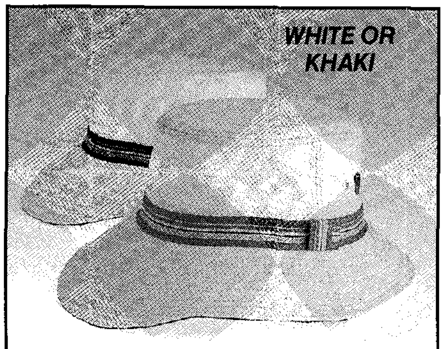
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Trade and Industry, however, Mongolia's priority should be simply to establish markets. "We need to study marketing," he told me. "Nobody knows about our products, because up to now we have not had to worry about markets for them. Since nobody here has any experience in marketing, we are sending some of our young people to America, Europe, and Japan to learn these skills. When we get experience, and our economy is established, we think we can offer some really attractive exports—cashmere, for example, and vodka. Our cashmere quantity is not as large as China's, but our cashmere is longer and more suitable to Western fashions. On the other hand, maybe we have already promoted our vodka too much—we have big orders from the United States and the United Kingdom, but our factory capacity is limited to a million bottles a year. They're asking us for much more."

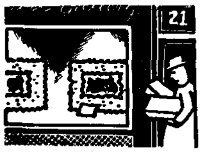
In fact, increasing numbers of Westerners are now turning up in Mongolia with a view to exploring the business potential of some of its soon to be privatized ventures. In the bar of the Ulaanbaatar Hotel, I talked with a representative of a Western investment-banking house. (He asked that neither he nor his firm be identified.) "I think what they're doing will work, and I think the free world is about to look at this place as an example of what can be done in a developing country," he said. "Foreigners who get here early enough will make money, because the ambition and courage of these people is like a breath of fresh air."

My final Government House interview was with President Ochirbat. I had been asked to submit written questions, and he read off prepared answers (with a few interpolations), which were translated by Suhjargalmaa, his press secretary. The President denied that the M.P.R.P. had any intention of dividing its opposition, and maintained that the minority parties "came into being entirely on their own." He continued, "On the other hand, one of the greatest lessons we have learned from our past is that we cannot allow the monopoly of any one political party, and we hope that now the existence of many parties that criticize each other may help us create a more effective society."

Why, then, were minority members invited into his government?

"We proceeded from the premise that it is very easy to sit by and criticize what others are doing, so we said to them, 'Come, please, and put into effect what you have been saying.' We aren't taking credit for their ideas, but we are giving them an opportunity to carry out what they have proposed."

I asked whether the hundred and fifty-five million dollars in emergency relief funds that Mongolia had received at the Tokyo conference would be sufficient to see the country through the winter.



"We need much more," he said, "but if this aid is used correctly I think it will overcome our shortages."

Did he think that privatization through a stock market would work out?

"We are not very optimistic at the moment that it will be successful from the very start, and we are very well aware that we will have a chain of bankruptcies, but Mongolia is embarked on this process once and for all. It is irreversible, and we are fully resolved to carry through our political and economic reforms."

Another of the questions I had submitted was how Mongolia would be able to protect its land and environment from foreign exploitation. "I can't give a hundred-per-cent guarantee of a hundred-per-cent protection from exploitation," Ochirbat responded, "but we are fully aware that the No. 1 effort required of us is to protect intact the nature of Mongolia and the whole of its environment. So, while we want investment and foreign technology, we will see to it that they are ecologically harmless. You know, maybe Mongolia will turn out to be one of the few countries in the world to meet the need of its people for development and still preserve the land and water God has given us."

God? "Did he use the word 'God'?" I asked Suhjargalmaa.

She understood the implication of the question: Mongolia may have relaxed its ban on religion, but was its President ready to go on record, in Government House, as expressing belief in God? She and President Ochirbat carried on a short colloquy in Mongolian, and then she turned back to me. "Yes, God," she said.

—Fred C. Shapiro

MUSICAL EVENTS

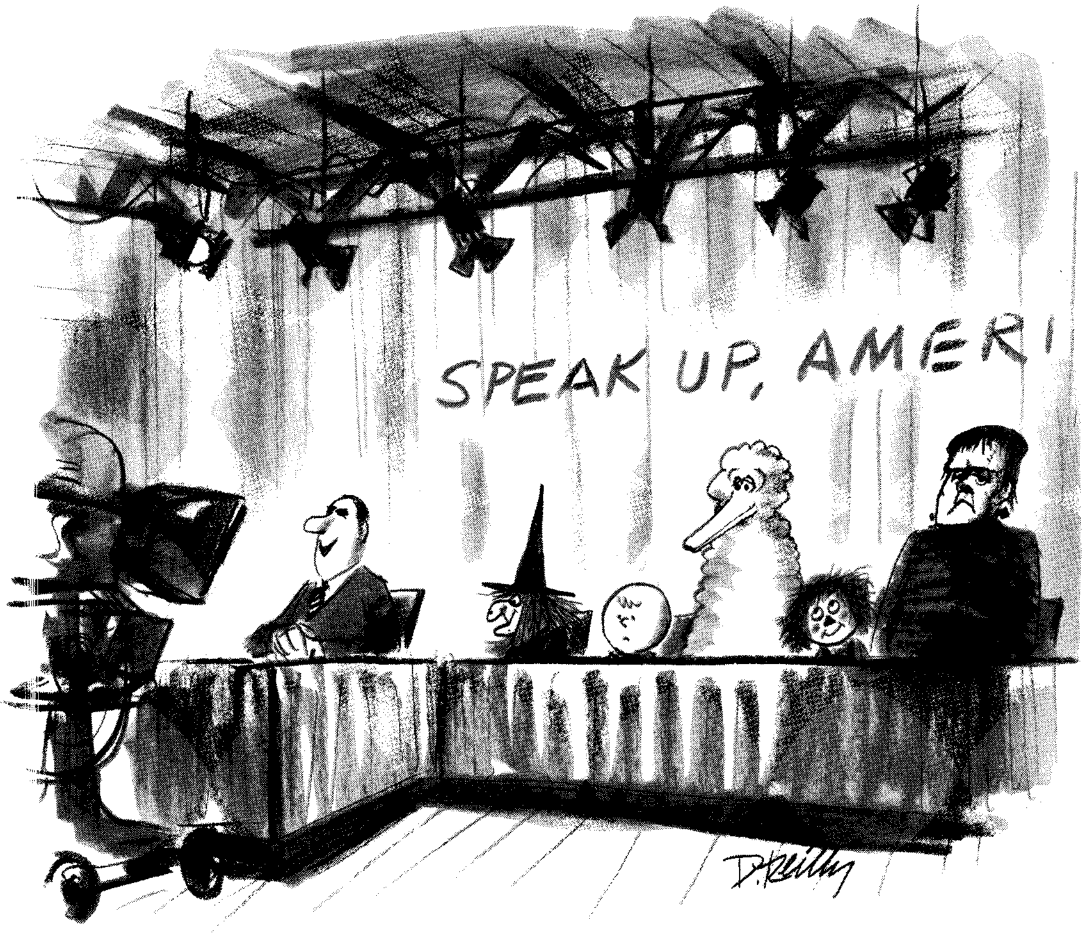
A Milanese Parsifal

IT is easy to imagine what Verdi might have said about La Scala's 1991-92 *cartellone:* one Rossini opera, one standard Donizetti, one standard Verdi, one early Puccini *five* transalpine operas, and just one contemporary work (banished to a subsidiary theatre). When Verdi saw the operas of Meyerbeer, Bizet, Wagner, and Massenet being taken up with increasing enthusiasm by the Italian houses, he bitterly reproached his countrymen for neglecting their national heritage and their native composers. St. Ambrose is Milan's patron saint, and the Scala opera season begins on St. Ambrose's Day, December 7th. It used to begin more often than not with a new production of a famous Italian opera, generally one by Verdi; and Riccardo Muti inaugurated his musical directorship of the theatre, in 1986, with a new production of "Nabucco." On occasion since, he has broken with tradition: he began his following seasons with "Don Giovanni," "Guillaume Tell," "Les Vêpres Siciliennes" (those two in Italian translation), and "Idomeneo," and this season, controversially, he began with "Parsifal," which had not been heard at La Scala for twenty years. The second opera of the season is Auber's opéra comique "Fra Diavolo," which comes on this week—nearly six weeks after the opening, and after the nine performances of "Parsifal" have run their course. The third opera is an "Arabella" borrowed from Munich, which opens on February 1st, and later in the month an Italian opera does at last appear—Puccini's "Manon Lescaut," directed by Jonathan Miller. In March, Mr. Muti, absent since "Parsifal," returns, to conduct Gluck's "Iphigénie en Tauride" and a "Traviata" revival. The third and fourth Italian operas are "Lucia di Lammermoor" and, in Rossini year, "La Donna del Lago"; the fifth foreign opera is Shostakovich's "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk," a co-production with the Opéra-Bastille. The new opera, at the Teatro Lirico under Scala auspices, is Salvatore Sciarrino's "Perseus and Andromeda," whose "informational systems" will be provided by the Sonological Computer Center of Padua University.

Mr. Muti is an ambitious internationalist. His "Parsifal" was warmly received, and all nine performances were sold out. In an interview he said, "From a musical point of view the reviews were extremely positive. Apart from my personal satisfaction, since this was my first 'Parsifal,' I consider them very important. They bear witness that La Scala is not only the theatre for the great Italian repertory but a theatre that today can say a word not empty, not peripheral about an opera of such exclusively German patrimony." In 1994, he added, La Scala will embark on a "Ring."

In 1903, Toscanini conducted the Prelude and Act III of "Parsifal" at a Scala concert. The opera was first staged there in 1914, once the thirty-year monopoly claimed by Bayreuth had expired; Tullio Serafin conducted, the Kundry was Lucie Weidt, and the Parsifal was Edward Johnson, the Canadian tenor who became general manager of the Met in 1935. "Parsifal" was sung in Italian, and at La Scala it continued to be sung in Italian—Tancredi Pasero was the regular Gurnemanz from 1928 to 1948; the verismo tragedienne Giuseppina Cobelli was the 1936 Kundry—until 1951, when Furtwängler conducted a German cast in a famous production with scenery by Nicola Benois. Scala "Parsifal" casts have since been of the international-circuit kind, and there were no Italian principals in the new production. The stage director was Cesare Lievi, who made his name in Germany as a prose-theatre director; the set designers were his brother, the late Daniele Lievi, and Peter Laher; and the costume designer was Ettora D'Ettore.

In the program book (a hardbound volume of nearly two hundred pages)



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Cesare Lievi set out some of his ideas about "Parsifal":

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> The scenes of the action are twofold and ambiguous, reciprocal and contradictory mirrors. . . .
>
> Dionysus. Christ. *Worttondrama.*
>
> Is the sacred Spear perhaps music itself?
>
> The knights of the Grail and Parsifal attend a performance. The public attends a performance of a performance: the knights (and Parsifal) are at once actors and spectators: hence the play of doubles and contradictions.

These ideas explained some quirks of the settings, but the production itself made a different effect. It had a straightforward narrative quality, far from the ritual solemnity of most "Parsifal" presentations, and, for a change, rather engaging and refreshing. Once upon a time, there was this curious commune of men living in the woods; suddenly a farouche boy bounded in, having just shot a swan; one of the men took him to a sort of Mass they used to hold. . . . A certain playfulness became manifest early. During the quiet instrumental strains when Gurnemanz and the four squires are supposed to be kneeling in silent morning prayer, one of the youths dabbled his feet in a stream that crossed the stage, and mischievously splashed his kneeling companion. Gurnemanz had brought a book with him into the forest; he opened it as he told the squires about Klingsor's garden of delight, with its devilishly fair women, and they clustered round him as if to look at naughty illustrations. Their own habitat was plain and unattractive: a few bare-boughed trees flanking the stream, a scatter of autumn leaves, a little boat drawn up on the bank. The transformation to the Hall of the Grail was strangely achieved: a wall with doorways was drawn across the stage, and in the doorways animated suits of glittering armor mimed slow-motion duels. The hall was a limestone apse, where the chorus sat in tiers while before it at a long table Amfortas and twelve chosen knights dined. Gurnemanz, being differently clad from the other knights, odd man out, suggested Judas at the Supper—an effect surely not intended. The general impression of Burne-Jones chivalric romanticism was colorful and pleasing.

In Act II, Klingsor's tower was an aptly gloomy "mirror image" of the hall. His flower garden, however, was a bleak circular corral, with the leaves of giant rubber plants peeping over the surrounding wall. Dressing the Flower Maidens is not easy; Wagner himself as the first performance of "Parsifal" drew near dreaded the costume-ball effect they might make. La Scala's 1914 maidens (Attilio Comelli's designs for them were reproduced in the program book) wore chiffon shifts—light, alluring, fashionable, suggestive of Fortuny—and carried exotic flowers. Miss D'Ettore clad her 1991 maidens demurely, chastely, in high-necked, long-sleeved, smocked Victorian dresses cut from some substantial fabric; during the seduction waltz they could well have sung, "This is one of our blameless dances." (Upstage, there were some dancers skimpily got up as Rackham elves.) Kundry wore a severe, very respectable dark velvet dress, more matronly, even regal, than erotically irresistible; she could have been the stern principal of a strict finishing school. Plainly, there was some idea at work about desensualizing the delights of the flower garden; but I missed whatever point was being made. The Spear episode—Klingsor hurls the holy lance at Parsifal, and he grasps it when it stays suspended above him—is stage magic that presented no difficulties in the old days, but here it was lamely managed: Parsifal backed up against a piece of scenery and groped behind it to be handed a duplicate spear.

In Act III, the Good Friday meadow was a repeat of the first scene—the trees still bare, the autumn leaves still lying, not a spring flower in sight—except that the Grail Hall apse, not a plain cloth, now formed the background. During the transformation, the glittering suits of armor reënacted their mime. Inside the hall, some of the trees now remained. And at the close Mr. Lievi and Wagner parted company decisively. In Wagner's opera, Parsifal, the "redeemed redeemer," is the new guardian of the Grail; a white dove descends and hovers above him; Kundry, after her centuries of accursed existence, peacefully expires; Amfortas and Gurnemanz kneel to Parsifal as he raises the Grail in benediction before the assembled knights; and the curtain slowly falls. In Mr. Lievi's version, the stone walls slide apart and the company, a living Kundry included, disperses through the gaps; Parsifal and Gurnemanz set off together for the woods, but Parsifal suddenly changes his mind and takes his own course; onstage, just Titurel's coffin and the Grail and the Spear—two shiny stainless-steel symbols abandoned, rejected—remain while the curtain slowly falls. It makes a striking close. Mr. Lievi is not the first critic to scorn Wagner's vision of a devout male community redeemed and adoring, or the first director to rewrite the libretto; but his shrugged ending is singularly perverse and unmusical. It seemed intended to throw into question the transfigured affirmation of Wagner's final statement.

ON St. Ambrose's Day, Placido Domingo was the Parsifal, Waltraud Meier the Kundry, and Robert Lloyd the Gurnemanz. By my performance, they had been replaced by Warren Ellsworth, Dunja Vejzovic, and Kurt Rydl; and in the pit Miksa Bareza had taken over from Mr. Muti. Mr. Ellsworth, having studied, performed, and (with Miss Meier as Kundry) recorded the opera with Reginald Goodall, is a secure and convincing interpreter. His utterance is clear, his phrasing is lyrical, and he knows how to join notes. In looks and demeanor he is unaffectedly boyish. His voice was adequate and true, if without any reserves of tone for the big moments. Miss Vejzovic, the Kundry of Karajan's 1980 recording, gave one of her more earnest and disciplined performances, though there were some strident moments in Act II. Mr. Rydl's Gurnemanz was notable for wonderful distinctness of words; his volume and his timbre tended to be unvaried, and any sustained notes were afflicted by a beat. Wolfgang Brendel, in many ways a strong Amfortas, pushed his sustained notes until they, too, grew unsteady.

Richard Strauss once said that he preferred to listen to Wagner's later operas in an old-style Italian-type theatre, not in Bayreuth, where "much of the scores' unending richness is lost." One should make the pilgrimage to Bayreuth "to hear and see the works in the form prescribed by the Master," but thereafter all of interest that the stage could offer would be a skillful new production or new singers, whereas the scores in performance were an inexhaustible source of new discoveries and revelations. Strauss added that he had no objection—despite the protests of those gentlemen the directors and the designers—to seeing a lighted orchestra and an able (but not physically overactive) conductor: that way, he could enjoy stage and orchestra in ideal harmony. It's a point of view. For the adventure of hearing "Parsifal" in Bayreuth itself there is no substitute, but hearing the work in a lively horseshoe theatre does add something. The Scala acoustics are not unanimously acclaimed, and they are said to be patchy. Perhaps I have always been lucky: whether standing in the topmost gallery, after paying a dollar or so to hear Maria Callas, or sitting comfortably in a critic's *poltrona*, close to the stage (price now about eight hundred and seventy dollars on opening night, thereafter about a hundred and seventy-five dollars), I have marvelled at the sonic intimacy and directness of one of Europe's largest opera houses. I heard this "Parsifal" from a first-tier box opposite the stage and found every detail from pit and from stage excitingly keen and close.

Mr. Muti is a master of full, firm colors expertly balanced, of clear textures however dense the score, and the Scala playing continued to bear his stamp. Mr. Bareza was new to me, but I had read favorable accounts of him as a conductor of the "Ring" in Graz—one who combined energy with a concern not to drown the singers. His "Parsifal" had those merits. It flowed easily and surely, never heavily. The Scala woodwinds are mellifluous. The strings are lithe and sweet, if without the breadth and depth of tone one expects in much of the score. The brasses were neither fiery nor darkly beautiful, but they were alert and did not blare. The Scala kettledrummers must use harder sticks than their colleagues in American and German orchestras do, for during drumrolls each individual impact could, in those crystal acoustics, be heard; instead of a deep purr there was a rapid but distinct rat-a-tat-a-tat, and one noticed as never before how often Wagner underpins passages of "Parsifal" with drumrolls. The Grail bells were fuzzy booms of ambiguous pitch.

—ANDREW PORTER

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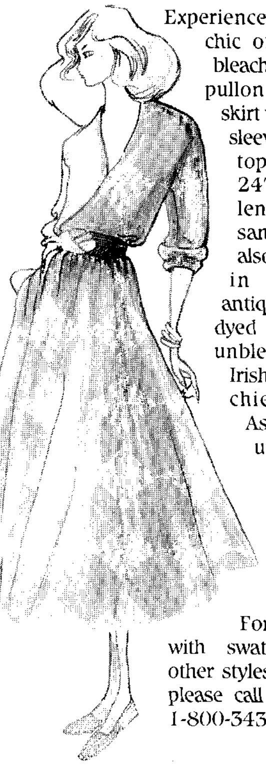

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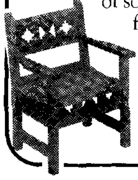

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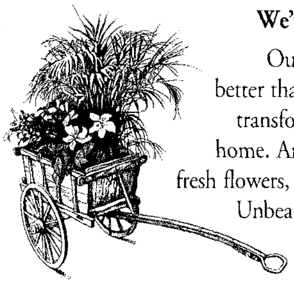

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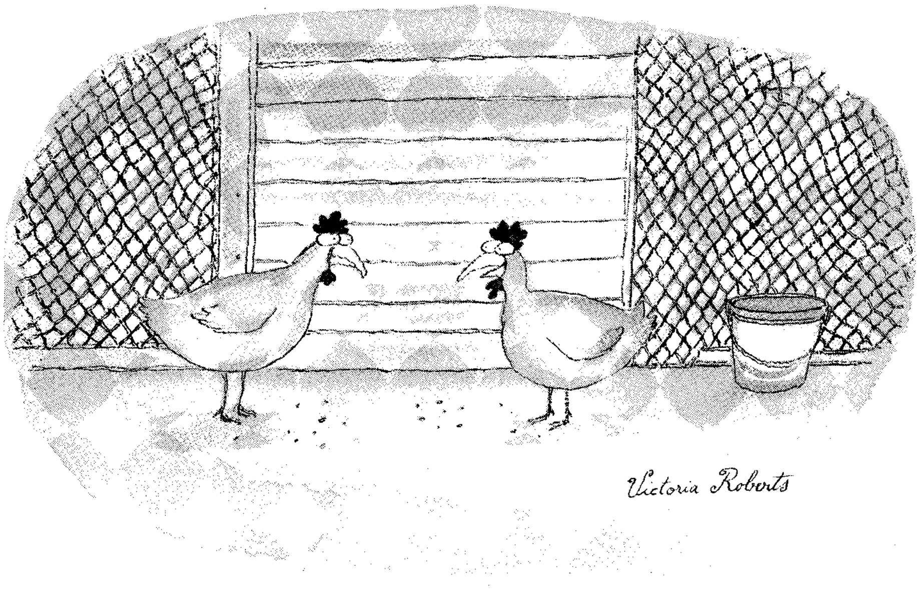
REFLECTIONS

THE DISORDERS OF PEACE

EVER since the Cold War ended, there has been a good deal of talk about a new world order, but, for all the talk, the nightly news is a kaleidoscope of disorder. Long-suppressed yearnings for freedom have exploded into view in all sorts of surprising places, but so have old grievances about land, religion, respect, and power which were long ignored by Americans during the years when this nation was obsessed with Soviet might and Soviet ambition. The world looks more confused than ever, and in many ways more violent than when talk of nuclear Armageddon was in fashion.

The major international conflict of the new postwar era—Iraq's takeover of Kuwait, followed by the five-month military buildup in the Saudi Arabian desert, the punishing air war, and the hundred-hour ground war against Iraq, all organized by the United States—was hailed by President Bush last March as the event that would make the new world order possible. The inconclusive battle, which left Iraq battered but with its defiant leader still in power, demonstrated, the President said, that the country had "kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all." But the months of war preparation, coalition-building, and war management and public-opinion management, along with the largely unsuccessful postwar efforts to persuade Saddam Hussein to accept the reality of defeat, have distracted the Bush Administration from its most urgent tasks: rethinking what the United States can and should be in the new century, and, with this objective in mind, developing a new strategy for navigating in a world in which the containment of the Soviet Union and ideological warfare against Communism can no longer serve as guiding stars. All the major powers face a similar identity crisis. Germany and other members of the European Community, Japan, and the Tigers of Asia—notably South Korea and Taiwan—are improvising new policies. But no other major power, with the obvious exception of the former Soviet Union, has emerged from the Cold War years with such a weight of long-neglected domestic problems as the United States has.

In the first flush of the Persian Gulf victory, it was commonplace to assert that the United States had shown itself capable of deploying its military power in such a way as to usher in a new American Century. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States is now the only global power in a "unipolar" world. But, as the months have passed, the "lessons" of the war have taken on a different aspect. The most impressive display of high-tech military power projected from a distance since the Allied invasion of Normandy in 1944 actually dramatized the reality that for a great power the problems inherent in waging war in the name of peace and stability are as formidable as ever. The United States had the organized lethal power to get rid of Saddam Hussein, but the President was not prepared to pay the political price that increased American casualties would have involved or to take responsibility for putting Iraq back together after an unconditional surrender or to figure out how to contain the power of Iran and Syria once the Iraqi regime was destroyed.



"I've come home, but not necessarily to roost."

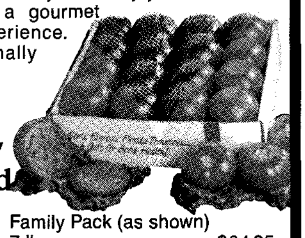
The Gulf War was supposed to silence the "declinists"—those who had been warning that the United States, by neglecting its internal problems because of misplaced spending priorities and strategic confusion, had less and less economic and political power to play a leading role in world affairs—but the jeremiads since the war have become, if anything, more frequent, and the language in which they are couched is less guarded. As the budget deficit grows, and the Administration is forced to recognize that the recovery it has been hailing for months has yet to happen, moderate men are resorting to immoderate words. Leslie Gelb, the foreign-affairs columnist of the *Times*, writes that the country is "falling apart," and calls upon the President "to beat back the internal rot." William Hyland, the editor of *Foreign Affairs* and a national-security adviser to Presidents Nixon and Ford, warns that the Administration must cut foreign commitments in order to deal with "a disastrous domestic agenda." Bill Moyers pronounces the society to be "in shambles." Felix Rohatyn, the investment banker who helped rescue New York City from bankruptcy in 1975, said recently, as he prepared to fly back to New York after a tour of Europe, that he felt as though he were leaving the New World and returning to the Old, and that prospects had so deteriorated in the United States that if he were starting out in life he would look elsewhere.

NOTHING has happened in Washington in recent months to suggest that the Administration is using the Cold War victory as an opportunity to rethink the national interest, even though George Bush has had more options to move in new directions than any other President since Harry Truman. In Bush's first three years in office, his personal popularity was so high and his political opposition was so weak that he was in a unique position to set a new political agenda. What do we want this country to look like ten years from now? What can we do to address the structural economic and political problems that have produced chronic fiscal difficulties in nearly every major city, impoverished almost a fifth of the nation's children, threatened the physical, economic, and social security of ever larger numbers of our citizens, and driven ever widening divisions between the winners and the losers in our fiercely competitive culture? Why has the quality of life—as it is measured by job security, educational opportunity, prospects for adequate and affordable health care, confidence in the banking and insurance systems, habitable and convenient places to live, and breathable air and drinkable water—declined so precipitously in one generation? What changes in policy are needed to reverse these processes of deterioration, to build on the extraordinary resources of the nation, and to renew American society? What kind of foreign policy will permit and encourage the mobilization of the resources and the energy so urgently needed to repair, restructure, and renew the American capitalist economy? What sort of influence can and should the United States exert on the world economy so that civil society in America can be protected and nourished? What are the core political and economic interests of the United States in a world that is changing faster than our capacity to understand the changes? What are the effective means for promoting and protecting these core interests? And by what political process are they to be defined? On the answers hangs the future of democracy in the United States.

These are not the sort of questions governments normally reflect upon except when they have suffered overwhelming defeat. Initially under the tutelage of the United States but mostly on its own, conquered Japan developed a strategy of renewal which was built on age-old national objectives but which struck out in radically new directions. The former Soviet Union is suffering terrible self-inflicted wounds, and what survives from the wreckage will depend upon how skillfully the leaders of the republics and their people make the thousands of wrenching decisions that must be made in the next few months. But the United States feels itself to be under no such compulsion. The victory parades are over, and the mood here is increasingly apprehensive. President Bush looks vulnerable because of the stubborn recession, but it will be a challenge for any Democratic candidate to convince the voters that he is better able to solve the serious economic problems than the Republican President who has persisted in the policies that created these problems.

The Bush Administration's new world order rests firmly on two pillars left over from the old order. One is a national-security policy based on the reaffirmation of military power as the badge of national strength and the engine of diplomacy. The other is a strategy to reduce debts and deficits through an economic policy based on free trade and the continuing reign of the dollar. Bush's basic strategy requires no major adaptation of American institutions to deal with the new international system unfolding before our eyes, which is probably what makes it doubly attractive to the President. Witnessing the floods of unanticipated change unleashed in the Soviet Union as a result of Mikhail Gorbachev's experiment with *glasnost* and *perestroika* is not likely to lessen George Bush's innate caution. However, the United States is not the Soviet Union but a wealthy, productive nation with a huge domestic market, a resource base that is still enormous, and, compared with many other countries in painful transition, a relatively tranquil society. The President is counting on depressed interest rates to create the psychological climate that will make his reëlection possible. But a military and economic strategy based on short-term domestic political considerations and bureaucratic inertia addresses neither the alarming changes that are taking place within this country nor the dangers and opportunities left in the wake of the worldwide revolutionary events of the last two years.

Up to now, President Bush's strategy has been to continue into the post-Cold War world the basic policies that "won the Cold War." These include a somewhat reduced but still



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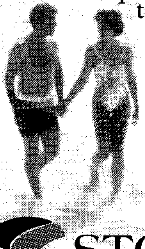

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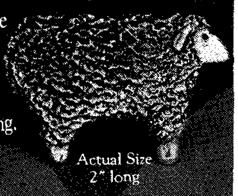

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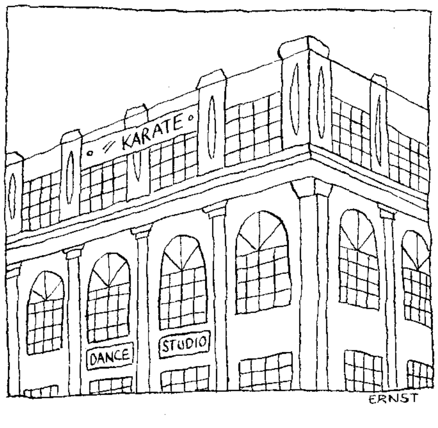
huge military budget. (By the beginning of the new millennium, if all goes well, military expenditures might be cut to eighty-five per cent of what they were at their peak, during the Reagan years—to a little more than two hundred and fifty billion dollars annually in the year 2000, instead of two hundred and ninety billion dollars, which was the figure in 1988.) If Bush's economic policies work—a big if—the Pentagon budget will look less consequential as the gross national product expands.

The politically persuasive reasons for maintaining ever more "effective" and "modernized" forces are legion. About thirty years ago, a prominent public official explained that American military involvement around the world was inescapable, noting that at any time during a twenty-four-hour day one-third of the world's population was awake making mischief. In the present era, of twenty-four-hour, round-the-globe electronic news-gathering, ominous pictures of violence and death make the official's point more graphically. The instinctive response is to reach for a bigger, better gun. What role American military forces can or should play in keeping order in this untidy, fragmented world is a critical question, but the question has yet to be debated in the political arena. While the military services have excellent techniques for assessing the physical damage they have inflicted, their political superiors tend not to ask whether the political objectives for which the United States' armed forces were ordered into battle have actually been achieved. The victory in Panama, for instance, netted a thuggish but expensive prisoner and a long trial; but two years later, according to the *Times*, the drug traffickers are still doing fine in Panama, although Panama itself isn't. (Cocaine shipments through Panama are as large as they have ever been.)

Nonetheless, the ability of the United States to deliver lethal power at a distance in dazzling ways makes many Americans feel safer. The United States, like other great countries, uses force in pursuit of big ideas. Americans rarely think about the many empires that have seen themselves as the chosen rescuers of civilization. Yet American idealism has on occasion served no less effectively than the British "white man's burden" or the French "*mission civilisatrice*" as absolution for politically questionable and morally repugnant military operations. Indeed, in the last few years the popularity of instant victories following mercifully quick and soon-to-be-forgotten battles has caused even traditional skeptics of military spending to fall silent.

It is hardly surprising that President Bush says that he has more fun running foreign policy than trying to solve domestic economic and social problems. Virtually every President since the Second World War has had the same experience. (Richard Nixon, who prided himself on being a world strategist, once dismissed domestic policy as having to worry about "outhouses in Peoria.") The reason is that in foreign policy the President is less accountable, in two distinct senses. First, he has greater margin to act on his own: several months after the Gulf War, President Bush made it clear that he would have relied on his inherent power to order half a million United States troops into battle even if Congress had not authorized the use of force. Second, it is difficult for voters to assess the President's performance in foreign policy except when the policy clearly results in national humiliation or defeat. To be sure, despite the efforts of White House "spin doctors" to control public opinion on the President's handling of unemployment, the economy, and the war on drugs, voters do their own judging—at the supermarket, in the unemployment line, on dangerous streets. But most people remain awed by the President when he acts as Commander-in-Chief or when he calls for national unity in a foreign-policy crisis. The result is that citizens feel incapable of judging when or whether the President has made a major foreign-policy mistake until it becomes obvious. Should Bush have offered Gorbachev aid when the Soviet leader had the popular support to make major changes? Should he have waited to let the sanctions work against Iraq, as so many former high officials urged before the fighting began? Who can say for sure? Does the global strategy that the United States has pursued over the last generation have anything to do with the fact that the national debt has jumped from four hundred billion dollars to more than three trillion dollars or that the dollar has been devalued by ninety per cent against gold and by sixty per cent against the mark and the yen? Does it matter?



The traditional categories of "foreign policy" and "domestic policy" are easily grasped by the voters: the former is about "them," and the latter is about "us." It is not surprising, therefore, that the Democrats—lacking a vision of their own and facing a still formidable Commander-in-Chief who put Manuel Noriega behind bars and accepted the surrender of the Soviet Union as a world power—deride Bush for worrying too much about the world and too little about Peoria. But this line of attack can trap the candidates in the coming Presidential campaign into a false and polarizing debate between an isolationist vision of "America first" and a neo-Cold War vision based on the old slogan "global responsibility."

Some of the America firsters employ just a dollop of jingoism, while others flaunt their isolationism, but none of them show much awareness of the impact of global changes on the lives of the voters they are courting. The neo-globalists try to adapt the Cold War vision to the post-Cold War world. They call upon the United States to assume even greater "world leadership" now that the archenemy is gone. The debate is usually couched in budgetary language. The United States has neglected its own society by taking on the defense of the world and spending money on other nations, and it is time to spend the money here, the America firsters say. The point has merit. The military threat posed by the Soviet Union has collapsed, and while the world may be more dangerous in a number of new ways, the military hardware, military doctrines, and threat assessments developed in the Cold War world are largely obsolete. The consequences of years of neglect of our domestic society are apparent as the recession drags on, and the employment, education, housing, and health-care crises deepen.

Yet for the United States to forget the rest of the world or to relate to parts of it selectively is as impossible as rejecting the law of gravity. The dominant reality of the new era in world politics is the globalization of the world economy. The United States economy is now so thoroughly integrated into the global economy that no President of the United States would be able to carry out an isolationist policy without doing immense damage to the American people, no matter how overwhelming his mandate to try. The great engines of the American economy—banks, industrial corporations, and such providers of services as worldwide insurance companies, accounting firms, law firms, and advertising agencies—have interests and loyalties that extend far beyond the United States. No national government can control them, much less force them to serve a nationalistic policy that they do not perceive to be in their own interest. At best, national governments can influence their behavior by creating incentives and disincentives. And no national government can control the huge amounts of capital that travel across the world via computer; twenty-four hours a day, every day, more than five hundred billion dollars flows through the world's major foreign-exchange markets, beyond the reach of any real regulation. Because money can be borrowed anywhere, national governments can no longer effectively manage their economies simply by adjusting interest rates. In a time of inflation or recession, the medicine—raising or lowering rates—must be administered in such strong doses that dangerous side effects are almost inevitable. Similarly in this era of a global economy, every American worker is part of a global labor pool. Even top executives are competing with non-Americans for their jobs. (A number of major corporations flying the American flag have C.E.O.s who are foreign nationals.) Protectionism and the economic warfare such policies inevitably trigger would only accelerate the loss of jobs.

Indeed, isolationism is as much a dream as President Bush's new American Century. The United States, the world's largest debtor nation, is unable to meet its payroll without the eighty billion dollars or more a year from non-American financiers it has come to depend upon. The isolationist alternatives are either to print more money or to cut essential services even further. Neither is a basis for building national strength. The physical security of the American people and their economic opportunities are wrapped up together, and both are dependent on the emerging world order. How and for whom the American economy performs depends greatly on how—but not whether—it is hooked up to the world economy. There are crucial choices to be made about how the myriad ties that bind this country to the world economy are to be understood, managed, or changed. But shifting major resources to the renewal of American society is not "turning our back on the world," as is often charged; it is the inescapable precondition for exerting influence in the world in behalf of American interests.

Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cold War assumptions still guide national-security policy. The most Soviet-obsessed advisers of the Reagan Administration, a few of whom survive in office today, believed that the Gorbachev experiment was a sham, or that, even if it wasn't, it would either lead to a reinvigorated Soviet Union, eager to resume its place as an aggressive world power, or provoke Soviet hard-liners into resuming the Cold War or a civil war—perhaps even one fought with nuclear weapons. Some still believe that the disintegration of the Soviet Union leaves the Russian republic vulnerable to adventurous leaders who might try to solve the economic crisis by resuming imperialist strategies of the past. In short, they maintain that, whatever happens in Russia, the United States should stick to its course. Since Russia has the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons, and control over them is considerably less secure than it was when totalitarian order held sway across the enormous Soviet landmass, some argue that only small reductions in American military capabilities are warranted. The day the breakup of the Soviet Union began, with a coöperative agreement between Russia and Ukraine and the banning of the Communist Party, President Bush said that these sweeping changes might offer "an opportunity for a vastly restructured national-security posture," but Secretary of Defense Dick

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Cheney said later that day that they would not. Nearly two weeks afterward, however, Cheney said that the modest cuts he had planned long before the August coup in the Soviet Union amounted to a vast restructuring: the military budget would be reduced by twenty-five per cent over the next five years. But, according to the plans of the present Administration, the production of nuclear weapons and new missiles and the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative will proceed.

The Gulf War, the civil war in Yugoslavia, and the coup in the Soviet Union and its chaotic aftermath have been godsends for weapons manufacturers, because they dramatize how unpredictable and violence-prone the contemporary world is. Just as Saddam Hussein's Scud missiles and the Patriot anti-missile defense gave the Strategic Defense Initiative a new lease on life (for no good reason: the technologies are completely unrelated, and, in any case, the performance of the Patriot was considerably less impressive than was suggested in wartime briefings), so the attempted coup in the Soviet Union, according to some defense experts, demonstrated the need to move forward with the notion of putting nuclear reactors on the next generation of offensive missiles. (The reactors would be destroyed in flight, spreading "harmless" radioactive debris in space.) Dr. Hans Mark, the chancellor of the University of Texas, who is a former Secretary of the Air Force and a strong advocate of considering the "modernizing" of the missile force in this lunatic way in order to impress future Saddam Husseins and Soviet right-wingers, thought that Gorbachev's presumed ouster made his point: in an interview about the proposed new missiles on the day the Soviet coup was announced, Mark said that the frightening event "reinforces the fact that you can't let down your guard."

Thus, even the collapse of a forty-five-year enemy can be adduced to demonstrate the need for expensive military programs, however preposterous, however dangerous. This reflex reaction is illogical but hardly surprising. Within the Bush Administration, the dominant view for the last year has been that winning the spending race and the technology race with the Soviet Union in arms procurement and military deployment was the decisive event in restoring American world leadership. In the aftermath of the Gulf War victory, a number of commentators concluded that the United States could now police the world on behalf of the other industrial nations and be paid handsomely for providing such a service. Upstart nations with nuclear ambitions could expect a surprise visit from the United States Air Force and would thereby be either deterred from or rendered incapable of developing weapons of mass destruction. Acting as the world protector (preferably with the cover of a compliant United Nations) would put the United States in a position to secure economic advantages from its industrial competitors which it could not command on the basis of its economic bargaining power alone. The evidence to support the idea that gratitude for military services rendered will yield economic and political concessions is not overwhelming. President Bush's postwar pleas to Germany to lower its interest rates were turned aside, just as his pleas before the war had been. No major trading concessions have been offered the United States by either the European nations or Japan since the Gulf War, although Japan made what appear to be minor accommodations during Bush's recent visit. The Uruguay Round of trade talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, aimed at reducing a wide range of barriers to trade in goods and services, remains deadlocked.

The hallmark of a militarized national-security establishment is a belief on the part of the people who run it that military power is the prime source of economic power. (A trading state, such as the United States was during the period of its greatest expansion and industrial development, tends to believe the reverse.) No one should be astonished that national-security agencies, the consulting and contracting

NAKED SEED

Look at this pinecone, Father,
green scales unopened where
seeds unfleshed by fruit wait for release.
Gymnosperm, the Greeks named it: *naked seed.*

Transparent drops, pungent
and sticky, bead the pine's trunk.
Wherever it's been breached
the oozing resin hardens to coat the "wound."

What comfort we take in connections,
sober and wild ones,
calling pitch the mother of disturbance
with her offerings
of frankincense and myrrh.

Protection adheres in the layers
of facts I've wrapped about me:
the pitch that caulked ships
carrying men to plunder
flavored their wine with its poison.

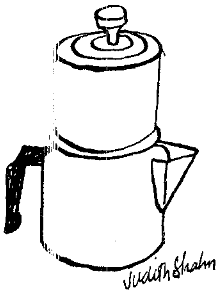
Sacred to Dionysus, the pine
watched over the maenads.
It brought Pentheus to his death
and yet it puts forth tears
like ours—that cleanse
and purify, as endings do.

So I'll pretend you hear my words
under its shade with me,
now that I find you in everything,
now that you are nowhere.

—Celia Gilbert

• •

firms that feed off their budgets, and the universities and laboratories that depend on their largesse are filled with people who have a Cold War world view and find it easy to apply to any new situation old ideas that have served them well. Like most bureaucrats—or, for that matter, most people—they have a "trained incapacity" to reëxamine the governing assumptions behind what they think and what they do. This incapacity was self-evident in K.G.B. generals and Communist Party hacks, but how to dismantle or to transform privileged bureaucracies once their original reasons for existence have significantly changed or they have failed is a central political problem of our age, an American problem as well as a Russian one.



Of course, the national-security bureaucracies never justified the enormous bite they took out of the federal budget, much less their existence, on the basis of the Soviet threat alone. Indeed, they were created before the Cold War began. Their original mission was to fight Germany and Japan in the Second World War. That war marked a critical divide in American history. Before 1940, the United States was a classic maritime power with a small Army, protected by two oceans and one of the world's major fleets; it derived its power from its expanding industrial might. It emerged from the war with an immense Army, Navy, and Air Force, a string of bases around the world, a large intelligence capacity, a huge war industry, and a network of universities and laboratories efficiently mobilized to support the military effort, yet with a population that was scarcely less isolationist in its inclinations than before the war.

But the official American world view had undergone a revolution as a result of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the dawn of the atomic age. When the atomic bomb went off, three and a half years later, it became clear that American ingenuity in organizing a successful project to split the atom had ended American invulnerability: it would be only a matter of time before other nations acquired the capability to destroy American cities. The idea that national security now demanded that the United States maintain a permanent reservoir of armed might gained ground inside the Truman Administration. In 1947, the National Security Act, which created the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council, and other Cold War institutions, all of which had a far-reaching impact on domestic life in America, was signed by President Truman. But the traditional antipathy of fiscal conservatives in both parties to peacetime military spending and entangling alliances, and the public apprehension about maintaining large standing armies in peacetime, remained until 1950, when the Korean War swept away these old American notions. The Soviet-endorsed attack on South Korea was skillfully used to solidify support for NATO and to build a bipartisan consensus in support of what President Eisenhower later called a military-industrial complex. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and others before him have called this largely secret, often unaccountable government within the government "the national-security state." By the end of 1950, it was firmly in place.

The armed forces had largely melted away in 1946 under the intense popular pressure of a "Bring Back Daddy" campaign, but the infrastructure was left in place for a rapid remobilization. Since those early Cold War years, military budgets have fluctuated, reflecting the waxing and waning of international crises and the state of the United States economy. But the national-security institutions have flourished, and the balance of power within the federal government has decisively shifted from the bureaucracies concerned with domestic security and economic health to those with a mandate to exert influence on non-Americans in a variety of ways, such as by eavesdropping on their meetings and telephone conversations, and by projecting American power abroad through troop deployments, arms deliveries, and covert action, including paramilitary activities, radio broadcasts, espionage, and foreign aid.

In the tense political atmosphere of a seemingly endless low-level war, which was accepted by the American people as the price of preventing a nuclear war or the spread of Communism across the world, the ever widening role of the ever expanding

"What we play... is life."

—*Louis Armstrong*

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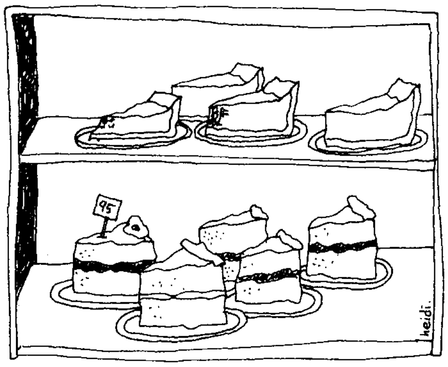
national-security establishment was not a matter for serious political debate. This or that airplane might provoke a heated argument among the contractor, the Air Force, and a committee of Congress. The hatching of plans in the C.I.A. to assassinate foreign leaders drew congressional scrutiny in the nineteen-seventies. The Korean and Vietnam Wars sparked considerable opposition. But for years—despite occasional controversies over weapons systems—the defense budget, in which were inserted large secret appropriations for the intelligence agencies, was passed with less than two minutes of floor debate. Only a handful of senators and representatives knew much about what was in the budget or why any particular item was there, and neither the military services nor their political superiors were required to defend their strategies or their budgets in the political arena.

The major activity of the United States government, and the overwhelming preoccupation of all the post-Second World War Presidents—the worldwide struggle with Communism and the preparation for war—was largely non-discussable. Fighting the Cold War on the scale that the President decided upon and in accordance with the doctrines of the Pentagon, the State Department, and the C.I.A. was the great given of American political life. The handful of skeptics and dissenters in Congress were marginalized; to challenge military expenditures or military adventures invited attacks on one's patriotism. Even to fund the essential underpinnings of civil society it became necessary to invoke the magic words "national security." It was panic at the thought of a Soviet dog orbiting in space rather than a commitment to American children that sparked the concern of the federal government with improving primary and secondary education in the late nineteen-fifties. The bill to create a national highway system was passed as a civil-defense measure. The culture of national security—millions of security clearances, restrictions on the exchange of scientific information, fake budgets—changed the role of Congress, debased electoral campaigns, and foreclosed a real debate about fundamental options all during those years. In this atmosphere, the Soviet Union, an overgrown Third World country in the paralyzing grip of a brutal but cautious dictatorship, was easily transformed into a threat worthy of our extravagant defense efforts.

IN recent months, national-security thinkers in the Pentagon, the State Department, and the C.I.A. have been directed to fantasize about what the military forces will be doing in the post-Cold War world, what sort of forces will be needed, and what new role the United States will play in world affairs now that the arch-foe that simplified and ordered the world for two generations of American policymakers is no longer a plausible military threat. Even though the primary threats that have absorbed the energies of the national-security institutions for so many years no longer exist, demobilization does not appear to be on the agenda. It is not easy to see how large standing armies, rapid-deployment forces, big nuclear stockpiles and massive delivery systems, or intelligence agencies in the business of sowing dissension and subsidizing opposition forces in secretly targeted nations can deal effectively with the disorders and dangers of the post-Cold War world. Nuclear deterrence was built on the notion of a chess game: the technology race was designed to keep the opponent permanently off balance, so that he would neither start a nuclear war nor do anything sufficient to provoke the United States into starting one. But nuclear stockpiles do not deter drug traffickers or enraged mobs or terrorists or separatist armies any more than elephant guns deter flies. The idealized superrational enemy, big enough, evil enough, and aggressive enough to be the target of a global war machine, has disappeared into thin air, leaving a disorderly remnant of the Soviet Union with a lot of conventional weapons and nuclear warheads and a disorderly world to which the established nuclear strategy is utterly irrelevant.



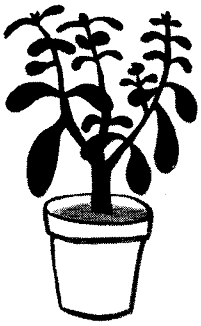
Up to sixty per cent of the American military budget over the years has gone for NATO and the defense of Europe. Present plans still call for the maintenance of a sizable American force in Europe and elaborate backup for it in the United States. Senior Administration officials concede that NATO's original goals have been achieved, but they contend that American divisions should stay, to symbolize the fact that the United States is not turning its back on Europe. (That would be a hard thing to do even without a symbol, in the light of the number of major American economic interests in Europe, the increasing significance of the American market for European corporations, and the crucial role that European governments and banks play in financing our debt.) To continue playing a major role in European defense in NATO's forty-third year was not an easy case to make even when the Soviet Union was still intact, given the state of American finances and the ability of European nations to defend themselves. For years, the invasion that NATO was designed to stop has looked increasingly implausible. As Admiral David E. Jeremiah, the vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted even before the Soviet Union disintegrated, the extraordinary internal changes across the Soviet landmass and in Eastern Europe make a surprise attack virtually impossible. For the Russian republic or, say, a suddenly aggressive Kazakhstan to assume anything remotely resembling the Soviet Union's Cold War posture would take a long time.

Moreover, all the major political underpinnings of NATO, which were always more important than the military ones, have been rendered obsolete by the Cold War victory. The strongest political argument for NATO was that it would anchor West Germany in the West and so undermine the greatest power the Soviets had over the United States and its allies—the power to dangle reunification in front of the Germans and cause them, in effect, to change sides. But reunification is an accomplished fact.

The bulk of the American military forces, beyond the small number of Army divisions and Air Force contingents assigned to defend the borders of the United States, are designed for "low intensity" wars, which have traditionally been Cold War battle-fields. In Central America and Africa, many of these wars are winding down, and Administration officials are saying that it is not in the interest of the United States to assume the role of policeman in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; but to date the conventional forces assigned that role have not been cut.

There are, of course, essential peacekeeping and policing tasks that will have to be performed if the world is to move in the direction of law and order. The United Nations Charter provides a framework for drawing on international military forces for this purpose. The United States has considerable expertise to contribute to a new, permanent collective-security arrangement, and the political climate for such an arrangement is more favorable than it has been at any other time in this century. If, on the other hand, the United States should be propelled by bureaucratic inertia into taking on the role of lonely sheriff, the American people will be stuck with the bill—not only the costs of wars but the costs of postwar cleanup and reconstruction. If the creditors of the United States were in a position to impose on this country the Benjamin Franklin virtues that the International Monetary Fund demands from poor debtor nations as a condition of assistance, this option would have disappeared from serious consideration long ago. A new American Century financed by creditors who are also our main commercial competitors is not an obvious answer either to the needs of the United States or to the stability of the world economy.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the control of nuclear weapons has become a matter of international concern. Twenty-seven thousand nuclear warheads are spread over the territory of what until last month was known as the Soviet Union. Most are in the Russian republic, but substantial stockpiles also remain in Ukraine, Byelarus (the new name for Byelorussia), and Kazakhstan. At a meeting in Minsk in December, Ukraine, Byelarus, and Kazakhstan expressed a clear intention to be nuclear-free. But, earlier, the possible involvement of these weapons in the continuing turmoil within the former Communist superpower caused Yevgeny Velikhov, a vice-president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and a leading expert on arms control, to sound the alarm, and call for international help in controlling them. It was reported that in the first hours of the coup a Soviet general acting on his own reduced the combat-readiness of the Soviet nuclear strategic-rocket forces, thereby sending a reassuring signal to the United States; however the reduction came about, President Bush publicly responded to it with a reassuring statement of his own. Of course, once the control of the legitimate Soviet government had collapsed, a different general could have given the reverse order. (There are plausible reports that the officers who had custody of the codes for launching Soviet missiles were as drunk during the coup as the leading conspirators themselves.)

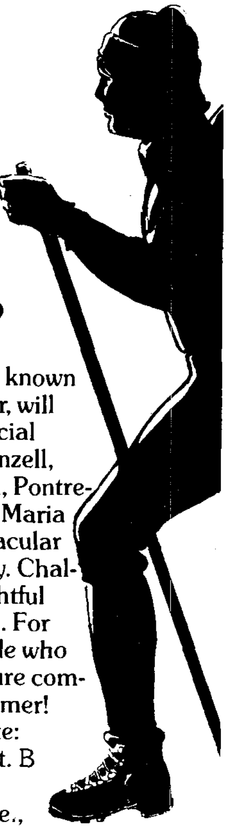


It is ironic that the United States, which in the past has lavished money and attention on the remaking of tiny Central American countries, lacks the money to exert much influence on the historic events in Russia and the other republics. Even if the Administration had a clearer theory about what to wish for in the new Commonwealth of Independent States (the former Soviet Union) other than the avoidance of wider civil conflict, it has little leverage, because, as one official put it, "we're not poor, but we're broke."

For the first time in this century, no major power appears interested in changing the global status quo by military means. The other great powers of the day—Germany, the junior members of the European Community, and Japan—neither feel militarily threatened by the imperial ambitions of any other power nor believe that using military power in an offensive way can advance their own interests or resolve the new conflicts that are now emerging. Those powers have achieved success as trading nations and have allowed the United States to shoulder the major share of the military burden. They are by no means unarmed, but in the absence of a worldwide breakdown of order they are unlikely to change the relatively subordinate role their military establishments play in their national development, and under conditions of disarmament they would have an interest in reducing their military establishments to much lower levels.

The people of the Soviet Union were subjected to a long and bloody education on the corrosive effects of militarization. Of even greater significance is the lesson that these people have quite possibly taught the political and military authorities: in the end, political power does *not* come out of the barrel of a gun. (Orthodox Marxist ideology never said that it did, but the Soviet state was run on that premise for many years.) Without romanticizing what happened last August—perhaps only a minority did really oppose the coup, and no more than a hundred thousand or so showed themselves on the streets during those fateful sixty hours to face the tanks, or even to walk the dog—there could scarcely be a clearer example of how loss of legitimacy leads to loss of power. At crucial moments, men with guns did not shoot, because they no longer believed in the system enough to kill their compatriots in order to preserve it.

IT is difficult for institutions in the thrall of Cold War thinking to develop post-Cold War policies. Unless the preoccupations, character, composition, and budgets of the federal bureaucracy are transformed, and the balance of power within the government shifts decisively in favor of agencies concerned with the renewal of civil society, the United States will be handicapped in addressing the problems of the economy and the civil society which have put the nation in serious debt, increased its dependence on foreign financing, and caused it to lose out in crucial struggles over technology and markets. If the threats facing the American people are no longer primarily military, then there is no reason that the process of demobilization should not begin. Demobilization does not mean doing away with the military forces. It means adapting the forces to peacetime conditions in a world that in no way resembles a Quaker village. How far and to what end this process should take the nation is the critical question. A strategy of demobilization, though it might properly assume a continuation, and even an escalation, of violence within nations, would be based on an expectation of peace between



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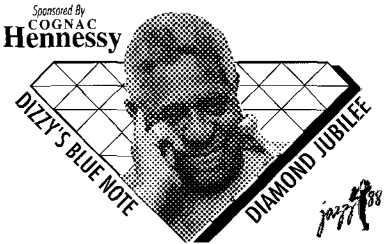

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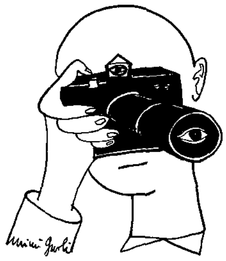
the United States and other military powers.

Many consequences flow from such an expectation. The huge bureaucracies of war planners, weapons dreamers, intelligence gatherers, and spy handlers can be radically pruned, and many Cold War activities can be swiftly ended. It is hard to see how continuing American military intervention in distant local conflicts would make the United States safer or the world more orderly, and the attempt to police the world would soon exhaust, not to say bankrupt, the nation. Unless the United States rethinks the roles and missions of its armed forces, we risk pouring money into military capabilities for wars that are ill-advised or are likely to be unpopular. In the Cold War, the political argument for ordering American forces into battle abroad year after year was that a willingness to fight small "proxy wars" with the Soviet Union would keep the nation from having to fight a Third World War. But the Cold War rationale for large rapid-deployment and interventionary forces has now disappeared with the Cold War enemy. Demobilization is now indicated because for the first time in the century we live in a world that no longer faces a plausible prospect of a world war, and the premise on which our existing military forces are based is fighting limited wars to "prevent" a world conflict. Even the theory of deterring wars is based on demonstrating to potential enemies that the nation is prepared to fight them, but the war system as we have known it all through this century has broken down. It is harder and harder to fight wars, or even to prepare for wars, that serve the national interest; that is, wars that do not have disastrous side effects capable of turning short-term victories into long-term defeats. The system for maintaining stability and order among nations which was based on the accumulation of war-fighting capacity has broken down because in an increasingly integrated global economy what nations need—indeed, what nations are—has changed. Whether national leaders comprehend this transformation is another matter. Those who do understand these historic changes will be able to develop the economic power to compete in the new world order and to build robust societies. Nations still caught in the logic of the old order face the prospect of decline and instability at home. Both domestic needs and international realities dictate military forces and war-related bureaucracies fundamentally different from and vastly smaller than the great military might amassed over the last fifty years.



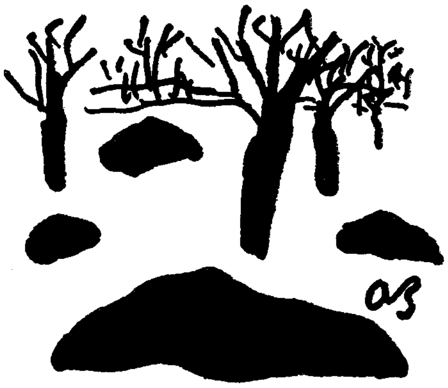
For the United States, the so-called peace dividend is in reality a debt we owe ourselves. By the end of the nineteen-eighties, federal spending on domestic programs was thirty per cent lower than it had been at the beginning of the decade. In 1980, mass transport, energy conservation, pollution control, education, and other investments in behalf of the security of the civil society amounted to 3.6 per cent of the national budget; by 1989, their share had been cut to two per cent. Over that period, there was a thirty-per-cent decline in federal support for mass transit, a sixty-one-per-cent drop in government funds for energy conservation, a decline of sixteen per cent in federal funds for education, and, in a decade that saw a huge loss of older manufacturing jobs and a major restructuring of industry, a sixty-nine-per-cent cut in job-training and employment programs. This disinvestment has coincided with mounting domestic problems: dramatically escalating violence (a doubling of the prison population in the nineteen-eighties rendered the United States the world's leading incarcerator of its own citizens, and on an average day at the end of the last decade a hundred and thirty-five thousand children were taking guns to school); homelessness (a scandal not helped greatly by a seventy-four-per-cent cut in the federal budget for low-income housing); the crisis in learning; and the widening gulf between the capabilities of American-based factories and those of foreign-based factories to produce marketable products at competitive prices, and the loss of American jobs and markets for American-made products that has resulted.

The problems of industrial conversion are formidable in the United States, and even more formidable in the Commonwealth of Independent States. But in this country there is much experience and thinking to tap, including the experience of an even bigger demobilization, of many millions of individuals, at the end of the Second World War. Year after year, a small number of members of Congress have submitted detailed plans for redirecting industrial resources and talent, but until now these ideas have been consistently dismissed by their colleagues as beside the point.

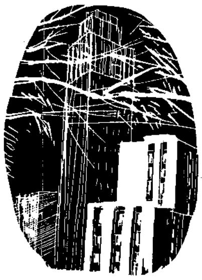
The problems involving the weapons industry can be seen as part of a larger challenge facing the American economy: the need to phase out a number of industries that are engaged in making obsolete, harmful, or noncompetitive products but continue to be subsidized in one way or another because they are seen as job machines or are the protectorates of powerful members of Congress. Despite the laissez-faire rhetoric of the last two Administrations, the United States has had an industrial policy of sorts ever since the New Deal; and since the war against Germany and Japan the driving force behind that policy has been the Pentagon, which has injected trillions of dollars into the American economy. By its choices of weapons and contractors, the Department of Defense has had in its hands the power of economic life or death over a broad range of communities across the nation. A national effort to redirect industrial resources and talent would require an explicit national industrial-conversion policy, but it would make sense for the planning to be carried out regionally and locally to the greatest possible extent.

Demobilization is obviously a much larger task than shifting industrial priorities. Government controls on information and university dependence on the military are in urgent need of congressional attention. Much of the legislation that the United States adopted to protect itself from Communism did nothing to advance national security but was effective in restricting traditional American liberties, such as the freedom to travel, the right to be free of government snooping, and the freedom from government-sponsored conformity of thought in the academy and in the media. Cold War laws that are still on the books restrict the flow of information needlessly; national-security regulations of various sorts have hurt American business and hindered scientific research. Secret spending by the national-security institutions has weakened the constitutional powers of Congress, and the cult of secrecy that has pervaded the national-security institutions has made it impossible for members of Congress—to say nothing of the ordinary voter—to know what the hidden bureaucracies are actually doing on behalf of American interests, or even how they define those interests. The United States needs to know more about the outside world than ever before, and there is now an opportunity to reassess the kinds of information needed in the post-Cold War world and the ways it can best be gathered. If a more open, more stable world is a prime American goal, then the covert operations and destabilization strategies developed for the fight against Soviet power and ideology are inappropriate. Robert Gates, the new director of the C.I.A., has recommended employing more spies. Veteran Cold War intelligence operatives argue that, in the world of infinite surprises which we have entered, it is more important than ever to know what leaders, dissidents, and potential terrorists are thinking and planning. The problem, however, is that expanded espionage is as likely to create information barriers as to increase useful knowledge, and more likely to promote disinformation than to foster the openness and mutual confidence on which a world without wars depends.

The very vastness of the demobilization task and the uncertainties it will bring to millions of people whose jobs once seemed as secure as those of tax collectors and undertakers guarantee that all sorts of ingenious arguments will be devised to demonstrate why demobilization is "premature." National-security institutions are marvellously innovative in conceiving and marketing threats worthy of their budgets. In 1944, a former president of General Electric recommended that a "permanent war economy" be continued into the postwar era, so that the United States would never again have to undertake the frantic mobilization it began in 1940. Today, many military experts believe that weapons laboratories and production lines should be kept in readiness for the next Hitler or the next Stalin. The nation should keep producing expensive weapons and run the risk of sparking new arms races in order to prevent knowledgeable weapons-makers from disappearing into the civilian economy. Another argument put forth in defense of retaining a large weapons industry is that little can be done about the trade in high-technology weapons, because it is a big earner of foreign exchange—for the United States and for many other countries. These are two of many points of conflict between the requirements of a national-security state with a military-dependent economy and those of a healthy civil society. The risks of demobilization need to be put up against the risks of further starving the civil society as well as against the risks of new arms races and weapons proliferation.



In the Commonwealth of Independent States, conflicts have already arisen over the division of authority in the vast military forces amassed by Stalin and his successors. Some two thousand former Soviet citizens, according to estimates of senior Administration officials, have an "intimate knowledge of nuclear-weapons design." They are in a position to become nuclear entrepreneurs, and there are reports that some nuclear-hungry governments are already seeking their expertise. Last fall, a shipment of sixty-six pounds of uranium was confiscated by Swiss police, and plutonium samples were seized in Italy; both were reportedly of Soviet origin. At the same time, traffic in "conventional" high-tech weapons continues despite the fact that the spread of lethal technology around the world threatens peace, security, and the environment, and it also circumscribes the freedom of action of the very governments that are supplying the arms. The United States has an overriding interest in averting the anarchic violence fuelled by the spread of weapons. Yet it is strangely passive in the face of what may be an unprecedented but transitory opportunity to build an international consensus to cut forces all around the world, curb arms traffic, and employ the talents of Soviet nuclear engineers in dismantling and cleaning up nuclear installations. The fatalistic belief that it is too late to stop the weapons spread not only guarantees that it will continue but creates an expectation of future violence which will keep international tensions and arms budgets high.



Nuclear warheads pose the greatest military threat to the territory of the United States and to the security of the American people. Of all nations, the United States now has the strongest reasons to press for a nuclear-free world. And for Russia, too, instruments of nuclear terror symbolize vulnerability, not power. Small, impoverished nations with little to lose, desperate political movements in the grip of terrorist leaders, and global crime syndicates are in a better position than great nations to use nuclear threats for political or economic advantage. Given the risks of unauthorized use of nuclear weapons in the event of civil strife in the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the drive to acquire nuclear weapons by Iran, Iraq, and other nations, the Bush Administration is under some pressure to rethink its nuclear policy. Following the failed Soviet coup last August, President Bush announced that he was making unilateral cuts in nuclear weapons, principally tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, and both Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced in response unilateral cuts at least as sweeping as the American initiative.

Bush's program is designed to make living with nuclear weapons safer, but, unlike most of his predecessors, he does not hold out the possibility of a nuclear-free world, even though the Cold War is over. He went out of his way to emphasize that there would be no peace dividend. On the contrary, the immediate impact might be a budget increase to pay for mothballing and other deactivation measures. Plans still call for the reopening of the Rocky Flats plant, in Colorado, where plutonium triggers for nuclear weapons are made. The Administration is still adamantly opposed to a comprehensive test ban, and is still pressing for the B-2 bomber and the silo-based Midgetman missile as the centerpiece of its nuclear-weapons "modernization" program. (Though congressional opposition has blocked the bomber program, considerable money will continue to be spent on parts for planes that are unlikely ever to be made.) In announcing his cuts in the nuclear stockpile, President Bush dramatically downplayed the Soviet threat, and thus opened up a set of far-reaching questions about national security and spending priorities. In the present international climate, there do not appear to be any good political or military reasons for any nation to acquire one more nuclear weapon, and there are excellent political and military reasons to press Russia, the other former Soviet republics, and all the other nuclear powers, including the United States, to get rid of virtually all of them. The process of shifting to a "minimum deterrent" could begin with major unilateral cuts, as former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and other weapons experts have proposed as being in America's own interest. But even a minimum-deterrent force, while it could provide a sense of security for people who cannot remember what life was like before nuclear weapons, and could deter a nuclear attack from another nuclear power, would be of no use in dealing with more plausible threats. Against what target does a nuclear power launch a "second strike" to retaliate for an unknown terrorist's bomb exploded in Vienna or New York?

The industrial world, two leaders of which are non-nuclear powers, now has a strong interest in halting the further spread of these weapons and in building an international consensus against their use in any form and for any purpose. However, what arms-control advocates have warned against for thirty years has happened. Weapons technology is widely dispersed, and, as Saddam Hussein's success in hiding some of his nuclear facilities even after defeat suggests, verification is far from foolproof, and it probably will always be. The confidence that a nuclear weapon will not be secretly constructed and used for blackmail can be increased by improvements in verification resulting from a further opening of nations under the pressures of an intrusive global economy. But of even greater importance would be a worldwide cultural shift, and that may now be possible.

At the dawn of the nuclear age, American policy called for the abolition of nuclear weapons, to be carried out under international control. The original thinking of Dean Acheson and David Lilienthal which led to the Baruch Plan of 1946 was based on a sober assessment of the long-term security interests of the United States. The basic idea was a recognition of the costs and dangers of an inevitable nuclear-arms race. In Stalin's day, the nuclear issue quickly turned into a propaganda war. In the years since, the prevailing assumption of the United States government has been that the moment for getting rid of all nuclear weapons was lost and gone forever, although most postwar Presidents—but not Bush—have given at least one impassioned speech declaring nuclear abolition to be an urgent goal. To set abolition as a real rather than a rhetorical goal, in the sense that the elimination of cancer is a real (though as yet unrealizable) national goal, would be a major departure. Today, the political conditions for a world consensus on abolition are much more favorable than they were in the Cold War years. In an important sense, the conditions for assuring compliance are less favorable, since the weapons and the technology for making them are in the possession of a number of countries. But the technology of surveillance is improving, and the possibilities of enlisting the coöperation of citizens in monitoring the activities of their own government are much more realistic. (Even in terrorized Iraq, a defector informed U.N. inspectors of the whereabouts of some of Saddam Hussein's previously unknown nuclear facilities.)

The heroic behavior of thousands of Soviet citizens during the coup offers some hope that, in an age of democratic yearning, people can be encouraged to put principles of democracy and dedication to an open society ahead of blind obedience and false patriotism. Because of the worldwide reach of communications, regimes that have lost the support of their people are finding it harder to keep them intimidated. The risks of world attention are increasing, and the political costs of human-rights violations are rising, albeit much too slowly. Given the accelerating violence we see within existing national frontiers, the rapid building of an international consensus on what governments can and cannot do to control their own citizens is crucial; and the presence of millions of citizens who are no longer terrorized by their own governments can serve as an added deterrent to cheating on a disarmament agreement. The international protection of human rights is now an indispensable component of an effective security policy.

Increasingly, democracy offers the essential mantle of legitimacy. Time is running out for regimes like Kuwait's and Saudi Arabia's and for one-party dictatorships in Africa. Rule by force is inherently unstable, and in the age of global communications it is becoming harder to maintain. For a quarter of a century, South Korea and Taiwan achieved economic-growth rates that were among the highest in the world in part by repressing workers, suppressing movements for democracy, and despoiling the environment, but by the late nineteen-eighties people had begun to rebel, and both countries have since been pushed in the direction of liberal reform. In a world in which the leading industrial countries are reducing the role of force and war preparation in their quest for security and order, the Saddam Husseins who have relied on armaments from abroad to establish their dictatorial rule will have a harder time holding on to power. Authoritarian rule in Asia, Africa, and Latin America was supported by the superpowers all through the Cold War because generals who could keep their own people in line made excellent clients. Or so it was thought. In a demobilizing world in which democratic aspirations are virtually universal and democratic practice is expanding, it will be harder to conceal violations of any disarmament arrangement.

The conventional wisdom, inevitably accompanied by the well-worn metaphor "The genie is out of the bottle," asserts that complete nuclear disarmament is unachievable, and that even to take it seriously weakens the deterrent power of nuclear stockpiles. On the other hand, delegitimatizing nuclear weapons and stopping their spread are vital to any stable world order. If the danger now is that these instruments of terror will be used in the service of crime and outlaw nations, it is in the common interest of all nations with an investment in order and stability to treat them as illegitimate. To keep insisting that nuclear bombs are acceptable weapons of war increases the likelihood that they will be acquired by more potential users and that they will be used; and the maintenance of nuclear arsenals not only stimulates further development and perpetuates secrecy but also poses serious health hazards. (Since 1945, Americans, Soviets, and Pacific islanders serving as weapons-makers, testers, and guinea pigs have been the principal casualties.) Until nuclear weapons are seen for what they are—not badges of prestige but instruments of blackmail and mass murder, no more acceptable in the new century than the Nazi death camps or the gulag—the prospect that looms is a world of Hobbesian disorder of catastrophic dimensions.

Not in forty-five years has humanity had the chance even to imagine a world without nuclear weapons. If the United States returned to its early-postwar-era thinking and made nuclear abolition a serious goal, the essential framework for achieving an interim minimum deterrent would be in place. Unless the basic attitude toward these weapons changed, the minimum would probably turn out to be in the thousands of weapons, and the threat of a global holocaust would not be perceptibly less. (A high-level military advisory panel has already recommended that the United States retain roughly half the nuclear arsenal it had built up by the end of the Cold War.) How fast the pace of nuclear reduction below a minimum of, say, a hundred weapons or less might proceed would depend upon the evolving political climate and the development of international institutions for adjudicating and enforcing a new legal order, rooted in the new political consensus. If these weapons of mass destruction are to be eliminated, they must first be demystified and devalued; perhaps the last nuclear weapon will be removed from the earth only long after everyone has forgotten about it. Developing a realistic nuclear-abolition strategy is a huge task, but no more formidable than the task of building a stable world order on weapons proliferation, spy wars, and arms races.

Taking nuclear disarmament seriously would have important benefits. It would provide some political and moral pressure against nuclear proliferation. It would force people to explore a wide variety of alternative security systems for deterring and reacting to possible cheating. The best chance that the world has to wean itself from its dependence on nuclear terror is for the governments of the principal nuclear powers to demonstrate in a dramatic way that they understand the dirtiest secret of the century: "nuclear weapon" is an oxymoron.

"I think I'm as patient as the next person, but my husband wouldn't stop saying 'yo,' so I shot him."

WE have experienced so many years of Cold War that real demobilization—radical reductions, drastic curtailment of military research and development, and radical denuclearization—sounds like fantasy. Could we ever really feel safe if the national-security-state institutions were dismantled or shrunk? Can we imagine an American society in which the civil liberties lost in the Cold War years are restored and the President has shifted his gaze from

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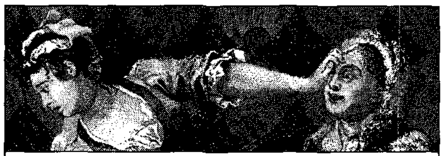

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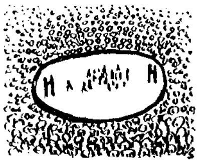
foreign enemies to American needs? The collapse of Communism has been hailed as the end of what the journalist E. J. Dionne, Jr., calls "history's greatest utopian experiment." In the name of perfecting a new Soviet man and creating a just and noble society, the self-proclaimed vanguard of the people imposed its failed vision on three generations with charisma, promises, lies, guns, and intimidation. President Bush has the politician's instinct about "the vision thing." Suspicion of great plans hatched by faceless men in unseen offices runs high at the end of the twentieth century, for this is the century of Auschwitz and the Gulag Archipelago. Tens of millions of people were sacrificed to malignant plans for purifying the race or winning the class struggle. It is the century of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, too, when even in a democracy war plans that take on lives of their own, and irresistible urges to test the technical effects and political impact of potentially world-destroying weapons, lead to needless slaughter.



As the century draws to a close, there is worldwide cynicism about whether humanity will ever achieve justice and greater equality. The idea of progress itself is suspect in many different quarters. Suspicion runs especially high in societies built on extravagant but empty promises or on noble visions exploited by corrupt and tyrannical leaders. Almost everywhere, people have become skeptical about what can be achieved through politics, and the gurus of economics across the political spectrum look more and more like sellers of snake oil. The appetite for consumer goods is being whetted everywhere, but dreams of achieving the good society are fading. The mystical appeal of the mythic free market is based not on the promises of Milton Friedman but on the products that Russians and Poles can now see on foreign television, and on the practical economic achievements of such authoritarian capitalist states as Chile under Pinochet, Korea, Taiwan, and, recently, Mexico. It was apparently the combination of harsh discipline, productivity, and the lure of consumer goods which attracted the leaders of the recent coup in the Soviet Union. If the current winter there proves to be as terrible as many predict, we should not assume that the experiment with democracy will be successful. Without some faith in a more decent alternative than an authoritarian free-market system—and in poor countries and ruined societies there are presently no models for more decent alternatives—repression in the name of realism may well expand over the lands that have so recently celebrated their first taste of freedom.

All this poses deep challenges to the Enlightenment premises on which the United States was founded. Both left and right are caught up in a crisis of thought. (New labels are obviously needed, but they are not ready yet.) The nineteenth-century belief in progress was mobilized by the left in behalf of the socialist project. Today, the skepticism about the power of reason or about the human capacity to create a good society in a fragmented, whirling world is mobilized by the ruling right in behalf of the myth of the free market. This vision of a global invisible hand is proclaimed to be benign; the destruction it leaves behind is characterized as "creative" precisely because the disembodied hand is in the service not of rationality but of greed and individual self-interest. Having triumphed over one utopia, the worshippers of the free market offer another.

The intellectual confusion left by the rapid changes of the last two years threatens to immobilize the United States at a moment when new paths to constructive change are opening. The collapse of old ideologies—not just Communism but Keynesianism and such reactions to Keynesianism as Thatcherism and Reaganism—makes possible a new understanding of what has happened to this society as well as to the Soviet Union. Realism is usually taken to mean accepting the world pretty much as it is and working with compromise and caution to move it in incremental steps along a preferred path, usually one wrapped in fog. To deal with the opportunities of peace as well as with its dangerous disorders, a genuinely pragmatic vision will require much bigger changes in this society than we have contemplated for fifty years. *It will also require a leap* of faith—not in the perfectibility of human nature but in the capacity of human beings to adapt their institutions to the needs of the species and of the earth itself. —RICHARD J. BARNET

BOOKS

The Method of "The Method"

WHAT is Method acting? Not even the most famous Methodologists would agree on an answer. With its roots in the emotional and psychological realism espoused by Stanislavski and its prestige cemented by the Group Theatre and then by the Actors Studio, the Method has become as much a body of legend as a process. The most celebrated Stanislavski-influenced teachers, Stella Adler and Lee Strasberg, split bloodily over emphasis: whether an actor should discover each truth from a Proustian immersion in remembrance (Strasberg) or from an imaginative grasp of the playwright's text (Adler). Elia Kazan, graduate of the Group Theatre and co-founder of the Actors Studio, summarized in his autobiography, "A Life," the tenets that most gifted American acting teachers hold in common: "Experience on the stage must be actual, not suggested by external imitation; the actor must be going through what the character he's playing is going through; the emotion must be real, not pretended; it must be happening, not indicated." That is as good a brief summary of Method goals as we're likely to get, and it's elastic enough to encompass all the actors Kazan himself worked with—not just Method stars, like Marlon Brando, Rod Steiger, James Dean, and Julie Harris, but less acclaimed Method practitioners, like Eva Marie Saint, and actors as different in training, attitude, and impact as Anthony Quinn and Warren Beatty. Americans have derived their sense of what Method acting is from the heightened emotionalism of Kazan's movies ("A Streetcar Named Desire," "On the Waterfront," "East of Eden," "Splendor in the Grass") and of performers like Brando and Al Pacino.

The old Method image of a navel-scratching actor in a sweaty T-shirt no longer resonates now that similar figures are played for vaudevillian fun on TV's "Roseanne" or "Married . . . with Children." And few equate the Method with the kind of documentary verisimilitude that is served up weekly on urban series like "Law & Order." No, what the Method means to contemporary audiences is Robert De Niro in "Taxi Driver" staring at the mirror with an uncanny, menacing quizzicality and repeatedly asking his reflection, "You talking to me?" Or it's Pacino in "Dog Day Afternoon" screaming "Attica! Attica!" as he turns a holdup-hostage situation into street theatre. Or it's Daniel Day-Lewis in "My Left Foot"—a British actor giving the kind of tumultuously spontaneous, lived-in performance that Americans have made their trademark, acting with his twisted mouth and ribald eyes and the muscles in his neck. The Method, in short, has come to mean not just realism and psychological and emotional truth but the power to make those qualities come alive with passion.

In the flatly titled but exuberant "Method Actors: Three Generations of an American Acting Style" (Schirmer; $24.95) Steve Vineberg, a film and drama critic (for the Boston *Phoenix* and *Threepenny Review*) and theatre professor (at the College of the Holy Cross), has written a book that matches its subject in temperament and gusto. Like the best Method actors, Vineberg achieves revelation through a wholehearted commitment to his material. In his preface he recounts how he first began to appreciate Method acting when, at the age of fourteen, he saw Montgomery Clift in "A Place in the Sun":

> His performance broke my heart. . . . I was responding not only to the forceful erotic charge of Clift's love scenes with Elizabeth Taylor, but also to his laconic expressiveness, his gift for communicating the feelings of a hypersensitive and inarticulate character. I'd never seen an actor convey the intensity of an emotional life so powerfully and poetically; I didn't know actors could *do* that—could actually recreate feelings I recognized in myself. Up to that point, I'd been under the delusion that acting was about big symbolic gestures and romantic flourishes and had to be loud and insistent; but here was this wonderful actor, speaking softly, saying almost nothing, and I was locked into every word he *didn't* say.

Vineberg is refreshingly free in his judgments; they come out of love for

"What's our dinner strategy?"

acting, and they either compel assent or provoke you to wrestle with them and make your own counter-discriminations. For example, even if you agree with his interpretation of Paul Newman's admirable two-act career (which is growing into a three-act one), you may disagree with his championing of more recent Newman performances, in films like "Slap Shot" and "Fort Apache, the Bronx," over the superstar-making performances in "The Hustler" and "Hud." There may be more applied intelligence, and a renewed and expanded acting energy, in Newman's later work, but there's an undeniable lusciousness about the sheer movieness of his early peaks. The way his slouch and scowl took the camera was something to see and marvel at, whether it was the result of technique, insight, or dumb luck.

Vineberg is a nimble writer. He makes connections and moves on—a rarity in authors with academic backgrounds. Sometimes a fleeting remark can incite a debate in your head. The book brings up the link between Brando and two actors who don't otherwise resemble him—Jack Palance (who understudied for Brando as Stanley Kowalski in "Streetcar" on Broadway) and Anthony Quinn (who played Stanley in the road company and also co-starred with Brando in "Viva Zapata!"). The author applauds Palance's and Quinn's Method expressiveness in (respectively) the TV and the movie productions of Rod Serling's "Requiem for a Heavyweight." Yet when he remarks that "Quinn gives one of his few uninflated performances" there, it's an inadequate summary of that once remarkable actor's career. Quinn had a wonderful spark of grandeur as Zapata's brother (for which he won an Academy Award) and as Paul Gauguin in "Lust for Life" (for which he won another). And as Auda Abu Tayi in "Lawrence of Arabia" he showed a canny streak of comedy. Acting on this heroic scale has its own truth—part emotional, part mythical.

When Vineberg errs, it's usually out of generosity to the Method. When he declares that no one between John Garfield in "Body and Soul" (1947) and Brando in "Waterfront" (1954) was as well equipped to play a boxer as they were, it's unclear whether he simply hasn't seen 1949's acclaimed boxing dramas "The Set Up," with Robert Ryan, and "Champion," with Kirk Douglas, or is putting down their stars. He doesn't give actors like Ryan, Douglas, Burt Lancaster, and Robert Mitchum the credit they deserve for embodying a tough new postwar disillusionment and widening the way for the Method boys—Clift, Brando, and the others. According to Kazan, Irene Selznick, who produced "Streetcar" on Broadway, thought of hiring Lancaster to play Stanley Kowalski. Two decades later, when Kazan couldn't persuade Brando to play the lead in the film of his autobiographical novel, "The Arrangement," he turned to Douglas. (Neither Douglas nor Kazan did his best work in that movie.)

But in general Vineberg is invigoratingly eclectic. He synthesizes aesthetic trends and arguments while homing in on the individual talents of actors, writers, and directors, not all of whom are Method alumni. This impassioned cultural history starts long before the formation of the Group Theatre: it argues that the teachings of Stanislavski meshed with the impulse of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American artists—"painters like Whistler and Thomas Eakins, and novelists like Dreiser and Frank Norris"—to push toward greater physical and emotional accuracy. The ensuing pages don't bog down in the internal conflicts that raged through the Group in the thirties and through the Actors Studio from its inception, in 1947. Vineberg isn't primarily interested in weighing the varying contributions of Harold Clurman and Lee Strasberg to the Group or of Strasberg and Elia Kazan to the Studio; he wants to explain how their collaborations gave rise to a cohesive yet flexible body of work. He locates points of debate, defines philosophical conflicts, then quickly considers how they affect what is important: the development of the art of acting. "Method Actors" is fair and unsentimental about the socially conscious Group, which has become a sacred cow of Popular Front culture. Vineberg is sufficiently at home with what is unique in the Clifford Odets of "Awake and Sing!" to see the vitality and the irony as well as the coarsening in the Hollywood-inspired histrionics of his "Golden Boy." He rightly deems the "Golden Boy" prototype of the bighearted, thin-skinned, rebellious boxer to be Odets' most influential legacy to Method-flavored mass entertainment. (He identifies Montgomery Clift's performance in "From Here to Eternity" as his "Method union card," for "in it he plays a sensitive boxer.") He also recognizes "Golden Boy" as the origin of the most significant failed-American-dream dramas, including "Death of a Salesman."

ONE of Vineberg's successes is his decision to ignore the typical scholarly divisions and bring Hollywood to the fore. His book first sets forth how the blue-collar protagonists of thirties movies, including those created by Edward G. Robinson and by Barbara Stanwyck, anticipated and paralleled the Group's accomplishments in the middle to late thirties. Then it fixes on America's postwar fascination with psychiatry, and on the pioneering movie work of Kazan, who brought the probing improvisations of the Method into movies as different as "Viva Zapata!" and "On the Waterfront." Vineberg pins down the affinity of the Actors Studio to the work of playwrights like Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Carson McCullers, and Michael V. Gazzo (whose "A Hatful of Rain" grew out of Actors Studio workshops).

Vineberg's tack isn't very different from Kazan's. Although his "*un*official" inventory of Method principles is a bit more technical than Kazan's, he refuses to split hairs over the true tenets of the Method faith. To summarize ruthlessly, the attributes he lists are (1) "verisimilitude . . . based on an acute observation of the world"; (2) providing psychological grounding for stage behavior, largely through the establishment of a "throughline" for each character; (3) expressing "genuine emotion," possibly through the technique of "affective memory" (in which the actor conjures the emotion by a Proustian immersion in remembrance); (4) using "the actor's own personality" as the source of his character's "psychological truth"; (5) encouraging improvisation "to keep acting spontaneous (and therefore lifelike)"; (6) progressing toward "the performance ideal of a true ensemble"; (7) stressing both the symbolic and the realistic values of props; and (8) demanding "an almost religious devotion on the part of an actor, based on what seems to be a mystical belief in the power of truth in acting."

This list rids the air of cant and lays out the tools for an analysis of "what we actually *see*": the work of actors "dominated by the interior, psychological, naturalistic paths" of Stanislavski, as it is carried on in the contemporary theatre and is captured in movies, TV shows, and filmed records of performances. Vineberg's use of these tools never becomes dry or instructorlike. He doesn't lose the spectator's view of drama as an art built on impressions, and he summons up theatrical presences as deftly as the most purely impressionistic critics. (Walter Kerr once wrote that Sandy Dennis has "the tongue of a delectable cobra"; Vineberg calls her "a verbal Harpo Marx strung out on downers.") The descriptions glide easily from one dramatic form to another—from stage to movies and on to TV. For a chronicler of Method acting, this multiformity is liberating: it enables him to rescue the subject from nostalgia and hagiography and partisanship. Perhaps because Vineberg is a practicing critic as well as a working academic, he isn't cowed by past authority. He succeeds in being both lively and judicious when he is explicating the differences in approach between Method teachers—for instance, Kazan emphasizing action and Strasberg authentic emotion. He always looks to finished work for corroboration. After quoting Estelle Parsons' famous comment on Strasberg's fascination with Marilyn Monroe—that Strasberg could "sometimes confuse a disturbance with a gift"—he backs it up with his own criticism of Monroe's most Method-influenced acting job: "Monroe's performance in John Huston's *The Misfits*—coached by Strasberg's wife Paula—might be a parody of the

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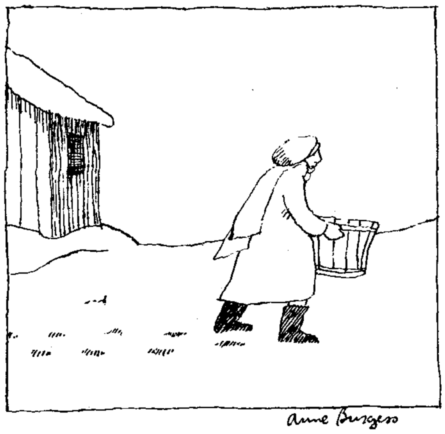
Method: sighs, strange pauses, sudden and distracted sidelong glances, bewildering mood shifts, fuzzy, broken line readings, a flood of unmotivated, undifferentiated feeling." But he also asserts, "You can't find a moment of wasted emotion" in Strasberg's creation of Hyman Roth in "The Godfather, Part II"—"the best promo anyone could ever have done for his approach to Method acting." As these quotes indicate, Vineberg is blessedly clear-eyed when it comes to the pitfalls as well as the strengths of the Method.

Vineberg honors the Method not as a technique but as a style, and as the source of the most consistent talent pool in American art and entertainment. His championship of the Method's fifties' legacy separates him from those historians who idealize its beginnings in the Group and bemoan its incursion into the American mass art of several decades. "What I hope to suggest in this book," Vineberg writes, "is not only what Method acting is, but how American culture has led our actors straight to it—how the Method, because of its link with realism, its affirmation of Freud, and its focus on adolescent rebellion as the core of much adult behavior, is a natural dramatic expression of the way Americans understand and define themselves." The author relishes the youthful volatility that energizes the most personal performances of Garfield, Clift, Dean, Harris, and Brando (in his heartthrob phase). He sees it as central to Americans' belief in opportunity and self-creation.

The book's way into the Method connects with the experiences of movie lovers and theatregoers who have grown up with several generations of the Method at once, seeing Odets' plays in revival and watching Kazan's movies on TV and queuing up for Brando, De Niro, and Pacino in Coppola's "Godfather" series. Vineberg is no slave to chronology (though he traces historical developments lucidly) or to academic categories (though he's precise in his distinctions). He's adept at knocking down artificial barriers between acting and the rest of culture. "Some actors appear to be the embodiment of the ideas and style of certain writers," he notes. To Vineberg, James Dean "is Sigmund Freud—or rather a postwar American reading of Freud which says each of us is a mass of neuroses that pierce our all-too-transparent skin at every angle." And he concludes, "His screen persona jibed with the frustrations of a nation full of teenagers champing at the bit."

Only occasionally does the writing become directly autobiographical, as when the author recalls how his mother became "unmoored" after seeing Rod Steiger's wrenching incarnation of the title role in Sidney Lumet's "The Pawnbroker," yet in effect the book is an aesthetic autobiography. Since Vineberg's first encounters with Clift and Dean, a slew of performers have embedded themselves in his consciousness, including such unexpected and welcome choices as Eva Marie Saint and Rip Torn. "Method Actors" is a detailed accounting of guiltless pleasures, and a guided tour through more than half a century of America's fantasy life—adolescent-into-adult department. Vineberg isn't self-indulgent. To him, the history of the Method is in the main a chronicle of individuals, not groups. This is the first book that compels one to register the Method primarily as a roster of memorable performances rather than as a religious calling or a catalogue of legendary, controversial productions. The absence of sanctimony and of propaganda helps the book bring the reader into a close, intuitive relationship with the subject.

ALTHOUGH some of the most suggestive insights in "Method Actors" come from urgently felt responses to Method performances of the fifties, Vineberg is equally perceptive and stimulating on the subject of pre-Method and non-Method actors (even when he slights them). He uses Walter Huston in the title role of William Wyler's "Dodsworth" to illuminate the old theatrical tradition of spotlighting key emotions (the heritage that the first generation of Method actors rejected): "His face may register nostalgic sadness, or tender affection, or enthusiasm so great it lights him up like an electric bulb, and then he'll freeze—isolating that feeling, making it the point of the scene. . . . There's not a moment of spontaneity in Huston's performance, but it would be grossly unfair to say he lacks feeling; he just orchestrates it differently, in his body and his voice, than the Method actors to whose style we've now become accustomed." He applauds the Hollywood actors who paralleled (and sometimes surpassed) the Group in achieving an effortless naturalism. He brings overdue recognition to Sylvia Sidney, the star of Hitchcock's great "Sabotage" and Fritz Lang's moving "You Only Live Once," who in fact joined the Group in 1939 for its production of Irwin Shaw's "The Gentle People": "No one in this era could suggest the desperation of a woman with a normal emotional range more persuasively than she could." Vineberg knows that the "close-up, all-revealing camera" makes film "the natural home of naturalism." The "magnificent" Barbara Stanwyck "seemed to understand that instinctively," he writes. "Though she received her training on the stage, Stanwyck sensed even in her first screen roles that muted reactions would register most realistically in the movies. . . . Compared to most of the motion-picture acting in the early talkies, which didn't take the intensifying presence of the camera into account, they seem mysteriously subtle and spontaneous and emotionally complex."



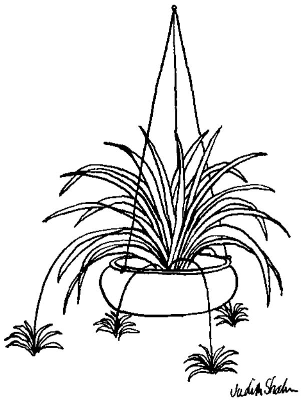
To illustrate the accomplishments of the Method's first generation, Vineberg considers not only John Garfield but also the lesser-known movie work of Group stalwarts like Roman Bohnen and Luther Adler. Some of the book's most evocative prose comes in its depictions of Bohnen's only two major film performances, in Lewis Milestone's "Of Mice and Men" and Wyler's Second World War homecoming epic, "The Best Years of Our Lives." Vineberg nails down "the weak alcoholic tentativeness" and the "strange, touching formality" that

Bohnen uses to expand the character of a drunken father in the Wyler movie. It's a pleasure to check this critic against a videocassette. Watching Wyler's movie before reading "Method Actors," you sense the values the director coaxed out of his cast; reading the book clarifies and heightens your response to each actor's contributions, and to the ensemble reality that the Group pioneered and the Method pursued.

Vineberg extracts all possible dramatic interest from the up-and-down career of Garfield, bringing out the sexual current that runs straight from the actor's startling movie début in "Four Daughters" to (most notably) "The Postman Always Rings Twice": "Garfield's sexual presence [is] an example of his faculty for physicalizing a complex emotional state without stylizing it, without making it unreal. He can generate suspense just by standing still, by the way he holds his body in check: In *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, when he tells Lana Turner he loves her so much that nothing else matters, his taut frame expresses a desperate eroticism." Vineberg's description helps the reader understand why Garfield was Kazan's first choice to play Stanley Kowalski in "A Streetcar Named Desire."

Using sympathetic imagination instead of affective memory, Vineberg gets inside the skin of each performer. He demonstrates how stars who lasted longer than Dean—through the intelligent selection of roles, and the ability to play against or into the expectations of their fans—could turn careers into odysseys. Of Jack Nicholson in "The Border" he writes, "He's moved from righteous outrage, the young man's emotion, to outraged decency, the hallmark of certain performances by other marvelous actors in the second, deeper flush of their careers."

The account that "Method Actors" gives of American acting in general has a similarly satisfying, odysseylike structure. To Vineberg, our acting has actually become more complex and diverse while seeming to move in circles. The natural veracity of stage and screen stars like Robinson and Stanwyck helped inspire the Group Theatre actors to go beyond the stylized personalities and emotionalism of the mainstream theatre. John Garfield brought an infusion of rebellious energy and sexuality to Hollywood, which Clift, Dean, and Brando built on. Along with experts in hypersensitivity (Julie Harris) and neurosis (Geraldine Page), the Method of the late forties and the fifties—the second generation—nurtured amazingly sane performers, like Maureen Stapleton and Eva Marie Saint. (The appreciation here of Saint's performances in "Waterfront," "A Hatful of Rain," and "Loving" is a persuasive salvage job.) Vineberg sums up three generations of Method characterization by contrasting Lee J. Cobb's interpretation of Willy Loman with Dustin Hoffman's. He delineates how Cobb "encompasses Miller's dramatic *idea* brilliantly," while Hoffman "breaks through all the pretension to the *crux* of his play, and that—the real human being inside all of Miller's talk—is what he's faithful to."



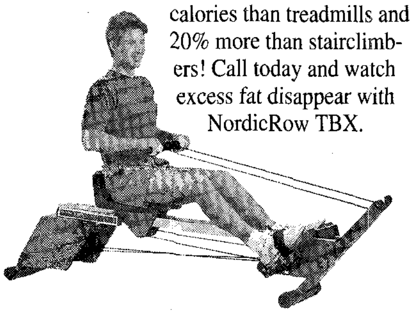
The point is that first-generation Method actors, like Cobb, could never totally escape the techniques that dominated old-fashioned theatre. They still used outsized gestures and went on shaping speeches for rhetorical effect, even when achieving the goal of greater psychological realism. Third-generation Method actors, like Hoffman, have moved toward a complete submersion in character. But, without stating it outright, Vineberg is also describing the endurance of a personality-oriented theatre, though in a more direct and realistic mode. Audiences go to Newman's or Nicholson's films for the latest permutations of their personas, and that holds true even for actors who, like Hoffman, are known mostly for their actorliness. As the author notes, Hoffman's performance in "Tootsie" wouldn't work unless viewers recognized something essentially Hoffmanesque underneath his transformation from the driven New York actor Michael Dorsey to the soap star Dorothy Michaels, and then to Dorothy's character, Emily Kimberly.

Sometimes the book's working definition of the Method can seem almost too elastic. When the author applies this label to contemporary performers who use their own stratagems to achieve Method-like results—such as Jason Robards, in the late, great plays of O'Neill—he is in effect calling into question the point of using it at all. What *is* the Method, you think, if not a method? But, chapter by chapter, with one incisive portrait after another, the question is answered. The Method is the American acting legacy that set the foundation for our native acting genius. The Method is what artists like Garfield and Kazan and Clift have made of it.

Even more than Clift or Dean or Newman or Hoffman, Marlon Brando is the cornerstone of the Method's reputation and the most formidable challenge for any Method critic. And Vineberg is never nimbler than when he's writing on Brando. He lauds the actor's primal imagination, daring, and power, his flouting of conventions, his willingness to satirize himself in order to enliven a weak role, or to appear grotesque in order to extend the limits of a character. He divines the source of Brando's greatness in "the powerful dichotomy between machismo and poetry" that was first seen in "Streetcar," and describes how Brando joined those apparent opposites in the heated atmosphere of "Last Tango in Paris": "Brando's improvisations in this picture have the rhythm of actual conversation without its tonelessness. They're the dramatic equivalent of stream of consciousness—poetic representations of actual shifts of thoughts." He says that "Brando's acting in *Last Tango* takes us inside him in a way that few actors have ever allowed." Yet this critic rarely loses sight of acting's outward reach—the extraordinary creativity that enables Brando to hold an audience in his mental and emotional grip.

In the song "Nothing," from "A Chorus Line," a dancer recalls a Method teacher who assigned a class to "feel the motion" of a bobsled; of course, she felt "nothing." Vineberg's book shows that the Method cannot be reduced to a set of exercises. On the contrary, he reveals it to be "an acting style in constant, glorious flux."

—Michael Sragow



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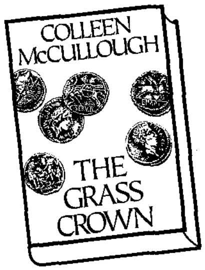

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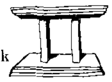

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BRIEFLY NOTED

GENERAL

The Scramble for Africa: The White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876 to 1912, by Thomas Pakenham (Random House; $32). In 1876, the interior of Africa was almost wholly unknown to Europeans; in 1912, seven European countries—Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Portugal, and Spain—ruled (or claimed) every inch of Africa except Liberia and Ethiopia; in 1991, as Mr. Pakenham's epilogue notes, every African country was independent. This lively history includes villains and visionaries of every race and creed, and the author presents them all with marvellous poise; he avoids sentimentality, and is as candid about the brutality of native African societies as he is about the cruelty of colonial exploitation. His intellectual clarity enables the reader to appreciate the fundamental absurdity of Europe's African venture. Nations fell prey to what the Germans called *Torschlusspanik*—a terror that if they weren't aggressive enough they would be shut out of Africa—and it prevented many of them from asking themselves exactly why they wanted African colonies in the first place.

Nixon: Ruin and Recovery, 1973-1990, by Stephen E. Ambrose (Simon & Schuster; $27.50). The third and final volume of this conscientious biography opens at the start of Nixon's second term. After his landslide victory, he made plans to destroy his enemies, amend the Constitution, insure world peace, and dramatically shrink the federal government. In the event, he accomplished none of these projects: he cornered himself by telling a succession of lies about the Watergate break-in and his role in obstructing justice, and, facing impeachment, resigned the Presidency in August of 1974. In enforced retirement from politics, Nixon set about rehabilitating his reputation as a statesman, and by 1990 he had regained a measure of respectful attention. Mr. Ambrose, a good historian, reminds us of the era's problems abroad (Vietnam, the Middle East, disarmament negotiations) and at home (inflation, an energy shortage), and gives them more attention than the nation, preoccupied with Watergate, was able to do. Like Nixon himself, Mr. Ambrose keeps reminding us of Nixon's high vision, but it's unimpressive if the best you can say for a man is that he could see the better yet pursued the worse.

A Time for Tea, by Jason Goodwin (Knopf; $22). A most uncommon travel book, by a young English writer who went to remote regions of China and India to find out and tell us about tea: its origins as a drink, in China; its husbandry; its manufacture (the word tea merchants use); its varieties (many thousands); and the ways it is or has been traded, transported, brokered, smuggled, prepared, adulterated, and condemned as a vice and praised for its virtues in poetry, prose, and song. Although his survey is stuffed with facts and figures, Mr. Goodwin handles them with a light touch. He has an eye for the quiddity of the people he encounters in the tea trade, and an appreciation for the exaggerated—and rather endearing—behavior of tea connoisseurs past and present, such as the nineteenth-century Chinese merchants who prized a certain very expensive tea from the Wuyi Mountains so highly that they gave tiny packets of it to special friends at New Year's but never drank it themselves.

Note: Diane Ackerman's "The Moon by Whale Light" has been published by Random House ($20). Nearly all the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*. . . . "Thurber on Crime," edited by Robert Lopresti, has been published by Mysterious Press ($18.95). Much of the contents first appeared here. . . . "The World of Charles Addams" has been published by Knopf ($30). Nearly all the cartoons in this collection first appeared here.

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A THOUGHT FOR THIS WEEK

[*From a letter from the University of Kansas Alumni Association*]

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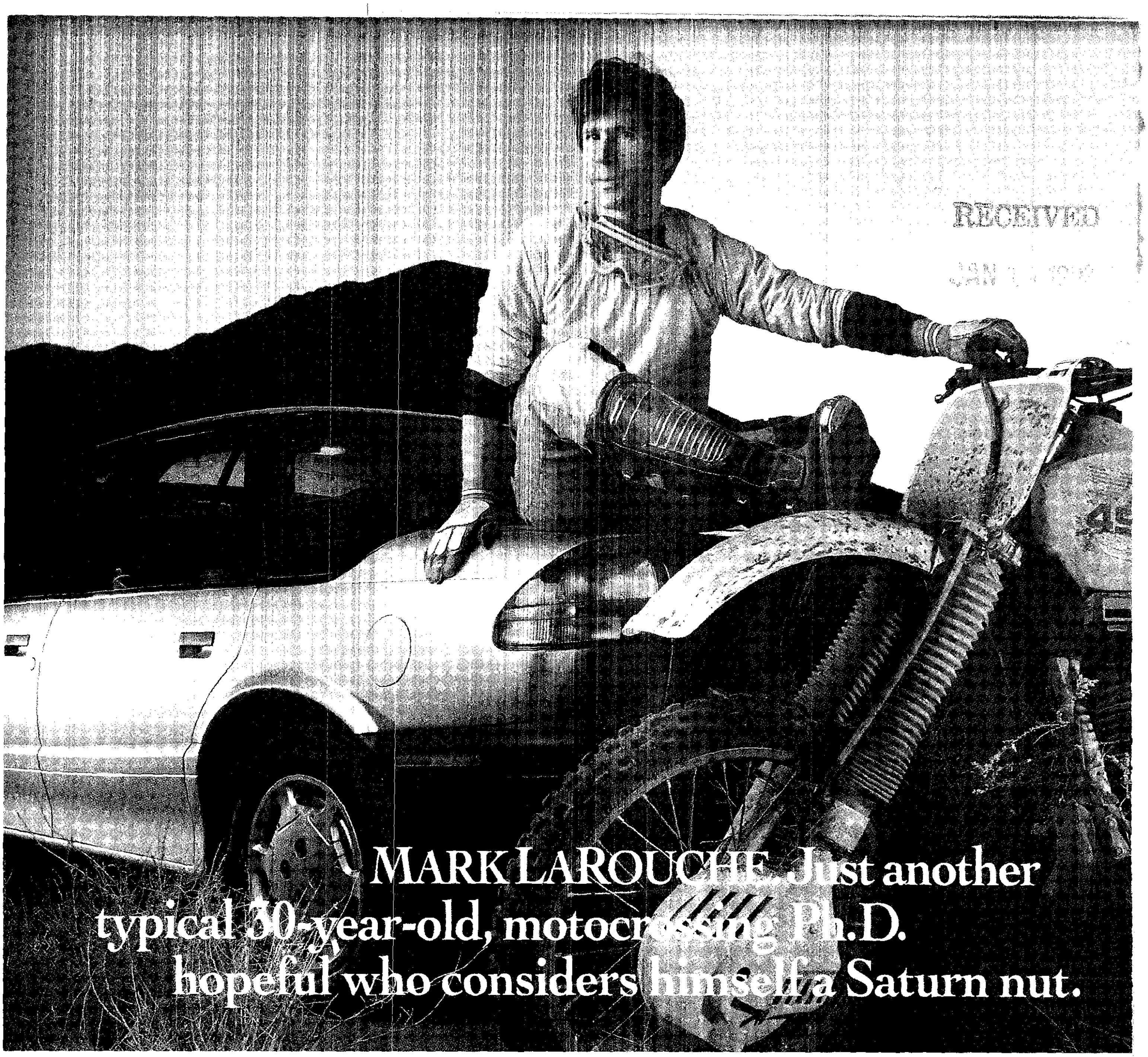

RECEIVED
JAN

MARK LAROUCHE. Just another typical 30-year-old, motocrossing Ph.D. hopeful who considers himself a Saturn nut.

Mark LaRouche obviously isn't the type to settle for some meek car with an anemic little powerplant.

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So after nixing the idea of buying a Honda Accord because the little numbers on the sticker weren't so little, Mark jumped all over the SL1. In his words, "along with performance that swivels a fair share of heads, the SL1 didn't cost nearly as much as the Accord.*"

SATURN.

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